

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

MR. Beverley Nichols, the well-known Fleet 'Street journalist in his book *Verdict on India*, riddled our entire being, with the fusillade of his incisory criticism. His supreme confidence in the impartiality of his verdict, goaded him to challenge an Indian to reply to his accusations and rebut the charges framed by him.

The author of this book, not only gives an effective reply to his baleful insinuations and hyperbolic flams, but openly impeaches him for having soaked his rancorous pen in canards, balderash, and collusive spohistry.

In order to make his book all compréhensive, the author went to Bombay to meet Congress big-wigs who were picked up by this prevaricator as the special targets of his sharp, poisoned arrows. In their informal, yet challenging interviews, they join the young author in exposing the perfidious machinations of this Tory hireling.

The author having impeached Mr. Beverley Nichols for having indulged in all sorts of flippant quibs and desultory gibes, calls upon him to produce his defence. Otherwise, he warns him, that the relentless Time Spirit of world opinion will adjudge him a barefaced fabricator of lies, a shameless dissembler and a crooked forger.

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CHAPTER ONE

No Indian in India

“THERE is no Indian in India” is the plaintive refrain that rings in the first chapter of *Verdict on India*. But, all the same, he who pursues the resultant echo detects a distant dying note of satisfaction that there is no Indian in a land of 400 million Indians. The reason is obvious. The multifarious diversity of culture that the first few pages of the book portray serves the author as a platform on which to stand and deliver his tirade. From here he splutters to “his American friends” whose freedom loving conscience may make them lean towards India. By ridiculing India he tries to make the sympathisers of India feel small. The underlying motive of Nichols, as is apparent in the first chapter, is to poison the foreign mind, and to alienate every feeling of common brotherhood that may still be lingering in spite of the omnipotent British Secret Service.

His topmost object in writing the first chapter is to tell the foreigners: “Oh, you ignorant and innocent men; you want to help India but where is India? India is not one India. It consists of scores of ‘Indias.’ And you who

shower the Indian with sympathy tell me if such a being does exist on this globe. I did intensive research work for a year in India, but was foiled in my attempt to discover a specimen of the species called Indian. He is so elusive. He will not meet you in person. So why bother about the well-being of a person who was never born. ”

Though Nichols does not say so in so many words, or express his sentiments in such blatant language, his objective is as unmistakable as his method is insidious. His whole way of looking at India and all it stands for, chaperones an intelligent reader to the end of a road bristling with the signposts on which is written the word, “ Propaganda.” Beyond the road is a valley. The last signpost shouts : “ Caution. Do not go further and jump into the valley of conclusions dug deep by Nichols for the unwary reader. ”

As we turn over the pages of History, we find that time and again the hungry hordes swept like bitter winds through the Northern Valley to chill and blast ancient Indian culture. The fabulous treasures that India guarded in her bosom had proved irresistible. Wild rumours about the untapped resources of India prompted them to invade this land. Originally they came as robbers to spoliage and fill their bags with jewels, and go back to their own country. But the manifold beauty of the land captivated their hearts. The egoistic pride of power and patronage urged them to settle in India.

Soon these overlords were kicked from their thrones by new and more powerful invaders. Some Moghuls spread a desolating reign of terror all over the country. Their one pointed zeal to convert the natives to Islam made them impervious to the propriety of their methods. But in spite of everything they could not swamp the Indian culture as their ancestors had done in Egypt.

Sikhism is the direct progeny of the Moghul fanaticism. The valiant fighters organised themselves into one compact living unit. Like a rock they stood and repelled the furious waves that threatened to flood the Punjab with conversion.

This group of brave and intrepid soldiers later on embraced a new religion, and even established a well-knit kingdom of their own in the North.

The little states of the Maharattas, the Sikhs and the crumbling Empire of the Moghuls were scratched off the map one by one by the intrigues of Clives and Hastings. The White man brought with him his Christ as his "camp follower." The Moghuls had "seated" the Prophet on the white stallion to lead their march into India.

Both of these modern religions are fanatically proselytising. The Moghuls compelled conversion at the point of the sword. The Britishers would tempt the dry throat of a destitute native to drink the sacramental wine by parading, like a clever salesman of Whiteways, a few gaudy clothes to cover his half-naked body.

Before the Moghul invasion, the population

of India was roughly speaking of Hindus. But as the wheels of time moved on and on, it started dwindling. For the coward the sharp edge of the sword was too cruel for his spongy heart. For the needy, the blazonary of a secure job proved too tempting. It is because of this enforced and treacherous process of proselytisation that we find such a vast number of Muslims and quite a lot of Christians.

II

Nichols in his delirium of exaggeration sputters the following fantastic statement :

“ These vast bodies of men (Hindus and Muslims) are so accutely conscious of their differences that they not only refuse to eat together, or think together, or pray together, they refuse even to live in the same unit of territory. ”

Being a novelist and not an historian Nichols has no respect for facts. The mind of the historian is trained to knit the fabric of his thesis with the sinewy threads of statistics. But a novelist is swayed by the panorama of vivid pictures that the sensitivity of his imaginative mind conjures up before his vision.

According to Nichols, because the two communities do not pray together, they have no *locus standi* to call themselves Indians. Has anybody ever heard of members of two different religions praying together? Do the Chinese Muslims say their *namas* in the Buddhist monastries? Or do the Confusians line up in the mosques? But all the

same they are as much Chinese as the flowers growing on a rose bush are roses.

Leave alone the fact of members of different religions not praying together. Let us see whether members of the same religion to which Nichols belongs pray together or not. Do the Protestants and the Catholics raise their sinning hands to invoke the mercy of the Lord in the same shrine? Are not their churches and forms of worship as different as the make-up and contents of two rival newspapers? To conclude that because Hindus and Muslims do not pray together, they are not Indians is like expounding the ludicrous doctrine in England that as the Catholics and Protestants do not make a common social call on the same Church on Sundays they are not Englishmen.

As regards not eating together, the vestiges of time worn inhibitions exist in the ruin of orthodoxy. Modern India does not waste even a split second in trying to find the religion of her host or the beliefs of her guest. Thousands of Muslims patronise the Hindu restaurants, and thousands of Hindus prize daily the delicious *pulao* they are served with at a Muslim restaurant.

The Sikhs are as much a part of India as a Tommy gun is a part of a British soldier's equipment. The Sikhs are the direct descendants of the Hindus. Nanak their first Guru was a Hindu. Because Nichols noticed a beard on the Sikh's virile face, and found a clump of hair guarded by a well-tied *turban*, he dismissed his claim to being an

Indian. Would not Nichols laugh, if I were to tell him that the tough navy boys, who take pride in growing the traditional small tapering beard, are not English though the blue blood of Nelson and Drake runs in their veins ?

As I saw them walking along leisurely on the Marine Drive at Bombay, they looked to me the flower of British manhood. Their well-trimmed light brown beards were a symbol of their personality. The fondness with which they kept it was a homage to those sailors who fought at Trafalgar.

But what about the Parsees ? It is true that they belong to the religion of Zoroaster. They have the Fire Temple where they pray, and the Tower of Silence where they throw their dead bodies. Ask any Parsee and he will say with a feeling of pride flashing all over his face that he is an Indian. In spite of differences in the religious practices and beliefs, a Parsee is as much an Indian as a pillar that supports the roof regards itself a part of the house.

To sum up the arguments of the chapter, let me say, that as in one of the higher organisms no limb is a mere repetition of any other, but the whole is served in some special way by each, so here also, no one province duplicates or rivals the functions of any other. The Sikh serves the Parsee and the Parsee the Sikh, the Hindu and the Mohammedan find themselves complementary to one another, and the Pathan and the Madrassi are both equally essential to the whole in virtue of their mutual unlikeness, and not their resemblances.

CHAPTER TWO

From the Regal to the Ridiculous

NICHOLS'S intensive study of Modern India began in the Viceroy's House in New Delhi. Geographically this palace is a part of India. But socially and morally, it is as much alien to India as the Woolworth skyscraper is to a man living in the slums of Bombay.

If the peripatetic author had an iota of sincerity and keenness to study India of the Indians, his first port of call should have been a rugged and unkempt hamlet. India lives, works and sweats in the unsophisticated villages and not in the gilded drawing rooms of Lady Wavell.

Nichols started at the wrong end and no wonder the whole of his book is a massive hotch-potch of wrongs done to India.

We had heard of the dreamland splendour in which the Viceroy of India lives. But I for one have never had the privilege of seeing with my own inquisitive eyes the dazzling pomp and show which constitute the day-to-day living of the Governor-General of India.

The way the liveried servants rise and fall like flowers in spring-time to greet Their Excellencies is more like a scene from a Laurel and Hardy Comedy meant only to evoke loud laughter.

This glittering spectacle becomes gruesomely painful when this pictorial panorama is unrolled before the background of poverty and squalor that stares into the blank faces of India's millions. In the forefront we find the Viceroy eating the daintiest dishes and the choicest delicacies. In the background we find the lame and the maimed with dribbling mouths begging for a piece of bread to quieten the gnawings of hunger. If we let our eyes travel a little further, we find, to our distress, living human beings exposing red and suppurating sores to evoke sympathy. Disease instead of being a curse to them is an investment. Instead of concealing and curing it, they market it as if it were essential consumer's good.

Nichols should bear in mind that every comfort in which the Viceroy rolls like Nero is directly secured by depriving the masses of their ordinary necessities of life. While an Indian worker sleeps on a biting cold winter night on the pavements of Chandni Chowk with not even a shaggy or ragged blanket to cover his shrinking limbs, the Viceroy lolls in peace and comfort in expensive furniture.

II

The tragedy becomes more poignant when Nichols, having eaten the salt of his regal hosts, holds a brief on their behalf, and having been pampered

luxuriously, justifies the existence and continuance of this pomp and splendour on traditional and moral grounds.

It is undoubtedly true that our princes too, both Hindus and Muslims, lived in grand style. But the splendour of the Moghuls had a charm of its own and the grandour of the Maharatas throbbed with a manly beauty in all its details of chivalry. The spectacle was becoming because it was original and spontaneous. But the present show-parade is artificial to India and a cruel mockery of former art, beauty and culture. It is verily a fall from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Whatever be the merits and demerits of the ceremonial surroundings of the Viceroy's life, it is a travesty of reason and a blasphemy of commonsense to say that because a certain practice is ancient, it must be perpetuated as a part of eternity itself. In this age which pulsates with a progressive spirit, to continue a preposterous custom because it is deified by antiquity is to smother this very spirit which promises human standards of life.

The real leaders of a nation in every country live as the average man lives. Their life is a realistic photograph of the lives of their people. With refreshing informality they mix with the masses.

They talk to them with a homely ease that inspires confidence. If power turns their head, they are discarded like a pair of torn socks. People pay their homage to them so long as they serve them. But here the Viceroys come, rule and enjoy themselves. During the five long years of their unbridled

sovereignty, millions even do not know their names ; let alone see them. They remain as mysterious and unseeable as Mount Everest to the men living in Anarkali.

Our kings were always accessible to the man in the street. Who does not know that Jehangir had installed a bell in his palace? The end of the long string lay in the adjacent street. If a citizen was victimised by any official, he had just to pull the string. The toll of the bell would announce that a subject was in distress. But in the ill-fated year of 1942, hundreds were subjected to Buchenwald Camp tortures and the deeds of the officials did not disturb the self-imposed serenity of the Viceroy.

Moreover, it was an established practice of our rulers to dress themselves in an ordinary man's clothes and go about the city *in cognitio* to acquaint themselves personally with the life and conditions of their subjects. But here the Viceroy, whenever he steps out of his palace, is piloted, followed and guarded by the Indian Gestapo. His movements are as regulated as that of a shuttle in a loom.

If Christ were to spend a few days in New Delhi, he would say :

“ It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a man living in Connaught Place to talk to the Viceroy. ”

Nichols may justify the existence of everything that is connected with the life of the Viceroy, but the Viceroys themselves do not feel at home in

their surroundings which are as formal as the squares on a chess-board. A museum may be studded and decorated with all the rarities of beauty and curios of art, but will a human being if he were to make it his new home feel comfortable? It was Lord Wellesley who once said in anguish :

“In this magnificent solitude I stalk like a Royal Tiger without even a friendly jackal to soothe the severity of my thoughts.”

Lord Cornwallis must have felt that he was a detenu when he let his mind speak thus :

“..... nor can I divest myself of the idea of being in a prison, for if I show my head outside a door, a fellow with a musket and fixed bayonet presents himself before me.”

III

Nichols is a past master in the art of juggling up beliefs and opinions of which even fancy would feel jealous. Look at this shocking statement :

“Any attempt at White House simplicity would be a piece of ludicrous affectation. The Hindus would laugh at it; the Muslims would despise it; the Princes would regard it as a form of lunacy.”

Has anybody ever heard of simplicity being a piece of affectation? As I open my book of *Synonyms and Antonyms* by C. J. Smith and turn over to page 17, I find that the antonym of Affectation is Simplicity. Perhaps that book was published in 1928 and Nichols wrote his book in 1944 and the meanings of the two words might have undergone a change !

His statement that "the Hindus would laugh at it and the Muslims would despise it," germinates and grows in the fertile imagination of the author himself. I for one have never met one who would dream of supporting this nonsensical humbug.

Perhaps the author is right to a certain extent about the attitude of the Princes. If the Viceroy, the overlord and the maker of these satellites, starts living like De Valera, with what justification can the Princes themselves live in a Czarist style as they do now? The instance of the Princes following the Viceroy and the Viceroy practising the ceremonies of their ancestors is like two hired and false witnesses giving evidence to support the perjury of each other.

But let the author remember one thing. If the Viceroy issues a notice in the next *Gazette Extraordinary* that henceforth Spartan simplicity would be observed by him, the Princes, who always dress like a newly married Marwari bride, would appear at the next Viceregal levee in the fashion that Gandhi attended the reception at Buckingham Palace in 1931.

Our Princes are nothing but His Master's Voice. It is true that since their master practises pomp and show with a zeal equal to their own, their conscience, which may some time pique them, soothes their heart when the half-naked skeletons shout outside their palaces like the Lost Souls in Dante's *Inferno*.

CHAPTER THREE

The Curse of Orthodoxy

SO far as his indictment of orthodoxy with regard to their treatment of untouchables is concerned, the author treads on safe ground. Every educated Hindu condemns this relic of social barbarism with sentiments that defy expression and with sincerity that bemuses the critics. If untouchability still exists in the year of 1946 in spite of all the frontal onslaught by Young India, it is because the citadel of scurrilous custom had its foundations dug deep in the strata of ancient prejudices and superstitions.

Modern India would have bowed in reverence to Nichols if he had devoted the whole of his book to untouchability. He could have used the lash of his pungent sentences to scourge orthodoxy and thus force it to right the wrong. We would have honoured him as a patriot and respected him as a reformer if he had unmasked in all its grisly nakedness the enormity of this practice.

But unfortunately he has harnessed the baneful existence of untouchability to sully the immaculate sincerity of Gandhi. He has used it as filth to

besmear the dawn-like purity of his motives. None in India has done more for the uplift of the untouchables than Gandhi, but still the author relays the words of Dr. Ambedkar that "Gandhi is the greatest enemy the untouchables have ever had in India." If he gambles with his life for the *Harijans*, his self-mortification is construed as a tricky and last minute desperate attempt to perpetuate the dictatorship of orthodoxy. If he fraternises with *Harijan* boys and girls, it is mischievously interpreted as a sly trick to hoodwink the foreign eye.

No one denies Dr. Ambedkar his zeal to kill this hydra-headed monster. But facing facts cold and naked as they are, one is forced to ask the learned Doctor: "Will the granting of separate electorates, as suggested by him, solve the problem?" Let us not be deluded by the fanciful spectacle that overnight the untouchables will emerge from their obscurity as a community strong in will, united in purpose and youthful in strength. And further that the recalcitrancy of the orthodox Hindus will knuckle down before the brandishing of their brooms. Or that the Brahmins will line up and bow obsequiously when the Pariahs in all their newly-acquired power will swagger about the *Mandirs* with the wicker baskets on their heads.

Nothing of the kind will happen. The granting of separate electorates will perpetuate their inferior status. This approach to the problem will neither expunge the evil, nor erase the stigma. The dark spot will become so black and deep that human

ingenuity will be helpless in devising means to obliterate it.

We, the educated young Hindus, are restless to strangle this Beelzebub of the Hindu Society. We are stirred with a passion to throw overboard this monster whose gaping jaws threaten to swallow Hinduism. But methods differ. Dr. Ambedkar says : "Give them separate electorates." We say : "We shall reform the orthodox Hindus."

It is not only irksome, but ignominious to admit that the pace of the reformist movement has been slow. The blame for the faltering progress is not to be hurled at the reformers. Their sincerity is as apparent as the sun in a cloudless sky. Their zeal is as spontaneous and impetuous as the wind. Still the rampart of superstition maintains its solidarity. But its foundations have become rickety and cracks are running all along the walls.

II

Let us look beyond the Atlantic to convince the author that the progress of a reformist movement is impeded and retarded by insurmountable obstacles. America has been acclaimed and applauded as the guardian angel of Freedom and Equality. The late President Roosevelt a few years back chatted with the world with great self-complacency from his fireside armchair about the Four Freedoms. But in spite of his unfurling the sky-high flag of idealism, the Negro problem stalks the New World in a most flagitious form. The untouchables here are not physically touched. But the villiany of the White

expresses itself in lynching the Black. His racial hatred is appeased by storming the crouching black body with stones and brick-bats. "His superiority" of the skin finds egoistic satisfaction by leaving the maimed and the mangled drowned in a thickening pool of blood. The followers of Christ pass leisurely along this shivering mass of pain and wounds. They spit at it as if it were a part of the Holy Service. While the more orthodox and the fanatic followers kick the entrails that protrude from the gashed belly.

The less said about the Ku Klux Klan organisation the better. These men liquidate the Negroes suspected of crime against the White before they are tried by the court and adjudged guilty. They have all the methods of a secret revolutionary society. They know that they can defy Law and Order with impunity. The author of *America Comes of Age*, writes on page 98:

"The best elements of the community often take part . . . society people, high officials, and even judges . . . they have told me this themselves . . . The cordial, polished gentleman with whom you are talking is possibly a murderer who has gone into the wood at night to kill a man outnumbered a hundred to one; and thousands of others, your friends among them, have been his accomplices."

Americans seem to believe that no amount of education of any kind, industrial, classical or religious, can make a Negro the equal of a White, or bridge the chasm which separates him from the White

man in the evolution of human society. The Negro is the sacrificial race. He is the burden-bearer of the White race. He constitutes the meek sill of society and suffers the ills of that lowly place. He performs the rough work of society. He suffers the afflictions and even commits the crimes which always fall to the lot of his status.

Let us give a few instances picked up at random from *The Chicago Tribune* and *The Crisis* to show the way the terror-stricken and pain-wracked Negro wretches are lynched :

“ There is no need to repeat the story of the Coatesville horror. You all remember the man who was taken from a bed in the hospital and burned alive for having shot a watchman when drunk. His writhing body was poked back into the flames as he tried to drag himself away. His teeth and charred bones were kept for souvenirs. All arrested for this frolic have been acquitted.”

“ Take the case of lynching a few days ago in dark and benighted Mississippi, while in New York City millions of people were acclaiming Lindbergh who had made an achievement which added to the glory of America, to its name throughout the whole world, and which added to scientific effort and achievement. At that very hour a mob of a thousand or more barbarians in Mississippi had taken charge of two Negroes, brothers, accused of killing a slave-driving overseer in a

saw mill. They took them from the hands of the constituted authorities, and what did they do with them ? They chained them to a telegraph pole, baptised them in gasoline and set them afire.”

Mr. Carlos F. Hurd, the staff reporter of the *St. Louis Post Despatch* writing in his paper as an eye-witness, once gave the following horrid description :

“ A Negro, his head laid open by a great stone cut, had been dragged to the mouth of an alley on Fourth Street and a small rope was being put about his neck. There was joking comment on the weakness of the rope and everyone was prepared for what happened when it was pulled over a projecting cable box, a short distance up the pole. It broke, letting the Negro tumble back to his knees and causing one of the men who was pulling on it to sprawl on the pavement.

“ An old man, with a cap like those worn by street-car conductors but showing no badge of car service, came out of his house to protest, ‘ Don’t you hang that man on this street,’ he shouted. ‘ How dare you ? ’ He was pushed angrily away, and a rope, obviously strong enough for its purpose, was brought.

“ Right here I saw the most sickening incident of the evening. To put the rope around the Negro’s neck one of the lynchers

stuck his fingers inside the gaping scalp and lifted the Negro's head by it, literally bathing his hand in the man's blood.

“ Get hold, all pull for East St. Louis,” called a man with a black coat and a new straw hat, as he seized the other end of the rope. The rope was long, but not too long for the number of hands that grasped it and this time the Negro was lifted to a height of about seven feet from the ground. The body was left hanging there.”

And this is what is done to Negro women :

“ A coloured woman accused of having shot a sheriff was taken by a mob and, together with her fourteen-year-old son, was hanged from a bridge. **THE WOMAN WAS RAPED BEFORE SHE WAS HANGED.**”

There are thousands of sane Americans who realise the heinousness of this savagery. But before the fury of racial animosity they are helpless. In protest some would beat their foreheads ; in shame some would heave a doleful sigh ; out of penance for the sins of their fellow citizens some would scribble down an angry letter to *The New York Times*.

The most shameful part of the Negro problem is that the racial prejudices have the imprimatur of the law of the land.

Let us examine the American Constitution as it exists *to-day* in its relation to the Negroes. The constitution of six of the American States prohibit Negro-White inter-marriages. Twenty-eight

of the States have statute laws forbidding the inter-marriage of Negro and White persons.

Negroes cannot move into blocks in which as many as 75 per cent of the occupants are White and "the use by Negroes of 'White' or 'mixed' blocks of any building or part of a building for a church, dance hall, school, theatre or place of assemblage for Negroes" is prohibited.

As to the virulent form in which this colour prejudice exists in the ordinary life of America the late Lala Lajpat Rai in his book, *Unhappy India*, writes :

"Separate waiting rooms and railway dining rooms are also the general rule. Separate cars are usually provided and on street cars White passengers are usually given front seats and coloured passengers the rear seats. It is usually impossible for a Negro passenger, however rich, to obtain a sleeping berth in railway carriages, and in case such a passenger on the Illinois railway, for example, crosses the Ohio river into Kentucky, he must give up his berth, and retire to the coloured coach. No Southern State permits coloured and White children to attend the same public schools and some States extend the provision to private schools also."

Now let us look at the country of Nichols. Class distinctions and social prejudices are as acute and sharp there as they are in India. Though it is no consolation, least of all justification, for our practice, the fact is that in England the caste system exists as well.

Was it not the caste system that made the West End of London the governing centre of the Empire ? Until lately it was the caste system that every British Ministry reserved an excessive number of places for the aristocracy, whose title to them was based mainly on the non-essentials.

Is it not a fact that a man born in ordinary circumstances expected and was expected to die in ordinary circumstances ; the scope of his efforts was traced beforehand by the accident of position, was handicapped in all cases and crushed in most by the superincumbent weight of convention, " good form " and the deadening artificialities of an old society ? Are there not certain trades, professions and occupations " respectable " and others that are not ?

There is not a single Englishman who has not the social privilege of despising some other Englishman, and the lower one penetrates in the social scale the more complex and mysterious and the more giridly drawn do these lines of demarcation become. Nichols is conscious of these caste prejudices in England. On page 24 of *News of England* he says : "THE MERE POSSESSION OF A COCKNEY ACCENT IS SUFFICIENT, IN THIS DEMOCRATIC ENGLAND OF 1938, TO DEBAR A MAN FROM NINE-TENTHS OF THE POLITE PROFESSIONS AND TO MAKE HIS ASSAULTS ON THE REMAINING ONE-TENTH EXCEEDINGLY EMBARRASSING."

A few years back I read in the *Jewish World* that while on a recruiting campaign, Sergeant

Issy Smith, V. C., was invited to a restaurant, but its owner refused to serve the Jewish hero.

Could there be a worse diabolical manifestation of the caste system ?

III

Coming back to the panacea of separate electorates to cure the disease of untouchability that is eating into the vitals of Hinduism, we find that the effects of this "remedy" have been ruinous in its working in the communal malady from which India suffers. The unbridgeable cleavage that exists between the Hindu mountain and the Muslim rock was brought into being by the giant spade of separate electorates. Instead of the political life of the country running youthfully on economic lines, it just sticks and rots like a carcass in the slush of religious prejudices.

The Hindus and Muslims do not feel one. This feeling of separateness becomes more and more acute. Their differences become sharper and sharper. The same thing will happen in the case of Hindus and untouchables if the latter are granted separate electorates. On the other hand, if the *Harijans* are allowed to stay, work and live as an indispensable limb of the Hindu society, the candidates of the so-called "higher castes" shall have to approach and beg the untouchables for votes. A vote is a vote in the eyes of the law no matter from which quarter it comes, whether from the Changar Mohalla or from the Sitla Mandir.

This single factor will compell the caste Hindus to revise their values of social superiority. This politico-social intercourse will dynamite the orthodoxy of the Brahmins and petrify the withering body of meaningless superstitions. Untouchable voters will shake off the slumber of their helplessness. The right to vote will galvanise the consciousness of the untouchables about the power that they wield. And who can deny that a man who possesses power brooks no nonsense ?

Before the flood-light of joint electorates and adult franchise the apparitional darkness of untouchability will vanish in the twinkling of an eye.

IV

Towards the end of the chapter the author arrives at the preposterous conclusion that the Congress dominated by the Brahmins has no intention of changing the situation regarding the removal of untouchability.

Before contradicting this charge, let me point out the author's inconsistency which by itself negatives his allegations against the Congress. C.R. and Pandit Malaviya he mentions as the most important big wigs of the organisation. The former because he is the "chief link between the extremists and the British" and the latter because he is "the leader of the extreme right wing of Hinduism." So far so good. Having given his verdict that the Congress has no intention of changing the situation, he tells us of the great work for the removal of untouchability that has been done by these very top leaders of the Congress. Nichols writes about Pandit Malaviya :

“Extreme Hindu as he is, he has fought the battle of the untouchables and admitted hundreds of them into the Hindu fold. That proves that his heart is very much in the right place, for only a deep love of his fellowmen could make him challenge the faith of his fathers.”

And as regards C.R. he tells us a story how he ordered a Government official to lead a group of untouchables into the Madura Temple, which for centuries had been debarred and closed to *Harijans*.

But that is Nichols all over. As we proceed we shall find many more contradictions. Meanwhile, let us concentrate on his exposition of the attitude of the Congress towards the untouchables.

First, the Congress is not dominated by *Brahmins*. Gandhi, its “dictator”, is a *Vasiya*. Its President, Maulana Azad, is a Muslim divine.

The statement of Nichols that the Congress has no intention of changing the situation is one of the Satanic untruths with which the book is replete. The white liar should know that ever since the appearance of Gandhi in the political arena, he has taken up the cudgels for the untouchables like a fanatic. The eradication of this pestilence is sworn to by every Congressman as an article of his faith. Its removal has been described by Gandhi *ad nauseum* as one of the firm pillars of *Swaraj*. In every movement of Non-violent Non-co-operation launched by the Congress for the freedom of India, its outright

obliteration has always been put in the forefront. Time and again Gandhi has said :

“ Hindu-Muslim Unity, *Khaddar* and the removal of untouchability are to me the foundation for *Swaraj*. On that firm foundation it is possible to erect a structure nobler than which the world has not seen. Anything without that foundation will be like a building built on sand.”

In the *Swaraj* as visualised by him every person in the land will feel the bracing sunshine of the Sun of Freedom for “*Swaraj* to him means freedom for the meanest of his countrymen.” He has made it crystal clear that in *Swaraj* there will be no political oppression or social ostracisation. Everybody is to be assured of and given an equal status. Just as the spring-time breeze shows no favouritism to any set of flowers similarly in the spring of *Swaraj* every person’s social and political longings will blossom in all their fullness and variegated beauty. He has warned the mighty rich and the socially high in these words :

“ I am not interested in the freeing of India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke. *The men below the bottom rung shall not be kicked from climbing up by those at the top. . .* The movement of *Swaraj* is a movement of self-purification.” (Itals ours).

And what does this movement of self-purification mean ? It is the self-purification of the caste

Hindus by themselves which comes from self-introspection regarding their malpractices committed against their brethren.

Gandhi's detestation of the practice of untouchability is so profound that he has even gone to the length of propounding the doctrine that this incubus of slavery lies heavily on India as a just nemesis for the monstrous sin of untouchability. And further that the debasing treatment meted out to our Indian brethren in South Africa is a form of divine punishment for us all because of the inhuman wrongs that we do to our kith and kin in India.

Absurd to a scientific mind though it may seem, he enunciated the thesis that the earthquake of Bihar was a just visitation. It rightly expressed the fury of God. It was the requital of Biharis' evil deeds against the untouchables ; their sufferings in person and loss of property was a public reprisal.

In the face of these unalloyed facts it is a travesty of common sense to accuse the Congress of any ingenious machinations in favour of orthodoxy. To assert that the Congress big-wigs are in league with some narrow-minded Brahmins is like saying that Pastor Niemoller was an underground member of the Nazi party.

Congressmen have left no stone unturned in their effort to convince the untouchable that they neither despise his profession, nor keep him at arm's length for fear of being polluted by his physical touch. I have seen with my own eyes Congress leaders like Dr. Gopi Chand and Dev Raj Sethi, not to speak of

the lively little Mohan Lal, sweeping the streets of the *Harijan* quarters with ordinary brooms. I have seen them picking up stenching filth from germ-ridden drains and collecting the revolting mass in their baskets. The eyes of the *Harijans* would beam with joy to see these high class Hindus dutifully carrying the baskets on their heads. They would follow them as children follow their mother. As the heavy contents emitting an offensive stench were released from the baskets into the giant dust-bins, the mind of the *Harijans* loaded with the burden of unexpressed curses against cruel and devilish orthodoxy became light.

A few years back I went to Sewagram. To my great joy I found that no professional sweepers were kept in the *Ashram*. The inmates of the *Ashram* were supposed to clean the latrines. By identifying themselves with the untouchables in all the details of their work they removed every feeling of inferiority complex that the "baseness" of their calling may engender in them. By living and eating with the *Harijans*, they hurled a death blow at the feeling of superiority that the accident of birth may generate among the caste Hindus. The writ of Gandhi that the work of a sweeper is as honourable as that of any other runs in the colony of Sewagram with the same vitality and rapidity as the blood runs in the veins of a youth of twenty-five.

V

It is interesting to learn as to what Gandhi thinks of a *bhangi* (sweeper) and his work. Here is an article taken from *Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi*.

“The ideal *bhangi* of my conception would be a Brahmin *par excellence*, possibly even excel him. It is possible to envisage the existence of a *bhangi* without a Brahmin. But without the former the latter could not be. It is the *bhangi* who enables society to live. A *bhangi* does for society what a mother does for her baby. A mother washes her baby of the dirt and insures his health. Even so the *bhangi* protects and safeguards the health of the entire community by maintaining sanitation for it. The Brahmin’s duty is to look after the sanitation of the soul, the *bhangi*’s that of the body of society. But there is a difference in practice ; the Brahmin generally does not live up to his duty, the *bhangi* does willy-nilly no doubt. Society is sustained by several services. The *bhangi* constitutes the foundation of all services.

“And yet our woebegone Indian society has branded the *bhangi* as a social pariah, set him down at the bottom of the scale, held him fit only to receive kicks and abuse, a creature who must subsist on the leavings of the caste people and dwell on the dung-heap. He is without a friend, his very name has become a term of reproach. This is shocking. It is perhaps useless to seek the why and wherefore of it. I certainly am unaware of the origin of the inhuman conduct, but I know this much that by looking down upon the *bhangi* we—Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and all—have deserved the contempt of the whole world. Our

villages have to-day become seats of dirt and insanitation and the villagers come to an early and untimely death. If only we had given due recognition to the status of the *bhangi* as equal to that of a Brahmin, as in fact and justice he deserves, our villages to-day no less than their inhabitants would have looked a picture of cleanliness and order. We would have to a large extent been free from the ravages of a host of diseases which directly spring from our uncleanliness and lack of sanitary habits.

“ I, therefore, make bold to state without any manner of hesitation or doubt that not till the invidious distinction between the Brahmin and the *bhangi* is removed, will our society enjoy health, prosperity and peace, and be happy.

“ What qualities should such an honoured servant of society exemplify in his person ? In my opinion an ideal *bhangi* should have a thorough knowledge of the principles of sanitation. He should know how a right kind of latrine is constructed and the correct way of cleaning it. He should know how to overcome and destroy the odour of excreta and the various disinfectants to render them innocuous. He should likewise know the process of converting night-soil and urine into manure.

“ But that is not all. My ideal *bhangi* would know the quality of night-soil and urine. He would keep a close watch on these and give

a timely warning to the individual concerned. Thus, he will give timely notice of the results of his examination of the excreta. That presupposes a scientific knowledge of the requirements of his profession. He would likewise be an authority on the subject of disposal of night-soil in small villages as well as big cities and his advice and guidance in the matter would be sought for and freely given to society. It goes without saying that he would have the usual learning necessary for reaching the standard here laid down for his profession. Such an ideal *bhangî*, while deriving his livelihood from his occupation, would approach it only as a sacred duty. In other words, he would not dream of amassing wealth out of it. He would consider himself responsible for the proper removal and disposal of all the dirt and night-soil within the area which he serves and regard the maintenance of a healthy and sanitary condition within the same as the *summum bonum* of his existence."

CHAPTER FOUR

An Interview With Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan

The author takes us along with him on his excursion to the Frontier Province. For the most part, the chapter is a picturesque description of jagged and doughty hills ; of yawning valleys that separate the mountains ; of lovely ravines crouching before the merry streamlets that sing their way down from the top of the hills.

The Khyber Pass is a romantic chapter from the Book of History. This indifferent and sober looking inlet between awe inspiring rows of gigantic hills has always held the key to the unfathomable treasures that Mother India cautiously guards.

A few years back when I was in Peshawar to play in the North-Western Frontier Tennis Championships, my friend and host, Krishan Lal Khanna (whom we fondly called Lalli), took me in his uncle, Mr. Mehr Chand Khanna's car to the farthest end of British India. Curiosity was itching within me to see with my own eyes what this mysterious and famous Pass after all was.

As we neared the barred gate, a peculiar kind of reverential silence overwhelmed me. It was an indescribable mixture of awe and homage. As we stepped out of the car, I stood calm and quiet. My head heavy with the memories of centuries spontaneously bent itself to honour the forgotten guardians of long ago who defended it with their blood and bones. As I lifted my head and looked beyond this Pass, the march of hungry hordes with murder in their eyes realistically flashed across my meditative mind that was impetuously travelling backwards. The speed that the wheels of my memory had gathered was so terrific that to cover the events of a century just a second was spent.

This drama became so life-like that my ears could hear the trumpets of war being beaten louder and louder. The nervous and helpless hills echoed and re-echoed the shrills of the bugles. The shouts "Onwards to Delhi" which emerged from the throats of invaders became so deafening that the few words that my friend Bawa addressed to me fell flat on my ears.

My mind became so obsessed and pre-occupied with the prospect of this "imminent invasion" which the magic of imagination had conjured up before my vision that the physical presence of the sentries and friends disappeared into space as quickly as a bubble does from the waves of a boiling sea.

Such is the captivating influence of this inlet. Such are its mesmerising powers.

I scratched my head and asked myself : "What would have been the course of Indian history if the

prankish escapades of Nature had not in their moments of jollity rent asunder the limbs of adjoining hills and created this pass?" It was a futile question. Because all the world over Nature has played a major part in moulding the destinies of countries. In the fitness of things an experienced historian should not soft-pedal the prowess and interference of Nature when estimating the causes of the rise and fall of nations.

II

"When an American hears the word India his subconscious mind immediately associates it with a man called Gandhi," said Jack Brooks the Negro War Correspondent to me at Simla during the days of the Simla Conference. He was right. For the name of our country and the personality of its leader are as inseparable as the spectacle of silvery sheets of snow from Mount Everest.

Similarly as one thinks of the Frontier Province of India one sees a giant clad in a loose *Salwan* and a looser shirt standing meekly on the borderline of the Punjab. His simple costume is dyed the grey of the hills. His face glistens with a chaste and soft effluence. And truly his radiant personality has brightened his Province as the sun lightens our world. The spirit of his teachings has revitalised the hardened veins of the Pathans.

I had never met this God-fearing man, fondly called by his people, *The King of the Pathans*. Recently at Bombay the long-awaited opportunity came my way as the Khan had come all the way from Peshawar to attend the A. I. C. C. meeting.

Hatteesingh who was affectionately looking after the Press boys supplied me with his address : Rustom Court, Worli

As I stepped out of Congress House and sat in the front seat of the Taxi, the good old (but mischievous) Behramji said : “ Where to sir ?”

“ To Rustom Court . . .”

I had not added the name of the road Worli when with a feeling of pride written all over his oppulent cheeks, Behramji interrupted me :

“ Yes sir, where Ghaffar Khan (with the wrong heavy accent on Gh) is staying. Good. I too will see him and pay my respects.” And he let the pressure of his foot go mercilessly on the accelerator.

“ But Bombay is such a vast city and the Khan only came two days ago. How did you come to know of his whereabouts?” I questioned Behramji.

“ Sir, I am a nationalist,” rushed forth the prompt reply from his happy lips. Is it not the duty of a nationalist driver like me (the stress being on the word me) to be well-posted with the addresses of Congress leaders ? Thus, by saving the time and money of Congressmen and journalists do I not express my patriotism ?” came his answer.

I nodded my assent and pondered over his remarks. As the Taxi whose pistons seemed to have become lunatics, whizzed along to the Flora Fountain I said to myself : “ There are as many ways of expressing one’s patriotism as there are of expressing one’s love.”

The sharp little ears of Behramji heard what

I said, and he coughed a little.

After fifteen minutes of hurricane drive through the streets which looked like the embroidered border of a *sari*, we reached Worli. The all-seeing eyes of Behramji spotted the tri-coloured flag waving gaily like the carefree bunch of flowers.

I pencilled my name on a slip of paper and Behramji took it upstairs.

“Sir, he wants to see you immediately,” said Behramji, in his low trembling voice. Post-haste I climbed up and my wondering eyes saw a strapping six and a half footer resting on an improvised bed. Needless to say, the bed was too small for his body which seemed to be endless like a stream flowing smoothly on a straight course. I stretched my right hand for a hand-shake. But unfelt and unknowingly it went voluntarily not towards the palm of his giant hand but towards his huge feet in the most respectful Indian salutation. I let it go. Perhaps the Khan noticed my predicament. With a paternal flutter of his hand, he asked me to pick up the chair and sit down.

I put myself at ease and told him that I was writing a reply to *Verdict on India* and since the author had accused the Pathans of many vile things, I would like him to explain them.

“I shall be glad to do so. Come and see me a 6 p.m. I hope that suits you,” the Khan affectionately said.

Behramji in Bombay was not only my Taxi driver but a self-imposed secretary as well. Having

seen in the first few days that I was rather an absented-minded and dreamy fellow, he insisted that I should tell him all my engagements. Like precious jewels he would guard in his newly-purchased note-book all the hours of my different appointments.

III

Punctually at 6 he applied his hydraulic brakes in front of the Rustom Court. Within a few minutes of my stepping out of the car I was chatting with the Khan.

SELF: The author of *Verdict on India* says that the root cause of so many murders in your province is due to the fun and games theory.

GHAFFAR KHAN: (After pondering for a while over the words fun and games). This is a monstrous lie . . . a distortion of facts. Before my land lost its freedom, there were no murders in the sense that there are to-day. It will be more appropriate to call these murders political dacoities. I am not merely indulging in anti-British propaganda. The veracity of my statement can be substantiated from figures themselves. Murders in pre-British days were comparatively rare. Come to Peshawar and I shall place the records before you. The moth-eaten pages of files lying listlessly in pigeon holes at the Secretariat will themselves narrate the true facts.

Let me tell you from my own experience. When I was a child, I distinctly remember that there were very few murders. The number of murders was as small as that in any other country or

province of India. But as the years rolled on I began to notice the figures of murders started mounting up. And there is one and only one cause :

SELF :
GHAFFAR KHAN : } The foreing rule.

As he finished this sentence the pitch of his voice shot high and it reverbated with anger. My ears could hear the subterranean echoes of resentment as clearly as one hears the undergro und rumblings of the earth which follow the rude shock of a violent earthquake.

“ Look at Afghanistan,” the giant arm raised itself pointing to its geographical position. “ There the people are not educated at all. But still the number of murders is insignificant as compared to that of the British occupied Frontier. Now, if the theory of fun and games were correct, there should have been as many murders if not more.

SELF : What is the state of affairs in the small states of your province ?

GHAFFAR KHAN : This is an appropriate question. The answer will strangle this newly-born monster of fun and games nonsense. Let us take for instance the Dir State or for that matter any state you may name. It is an incontrovertible fact that there are practically no murders in that state. The reason is plain. The Civil Service is not entrenched there to create factions and troubles. Unsettled conditions which result from this.

policy tighten firmly the bolts of thralldom. People live the life of normal, well-behaved citizens.

SELF : You have dedicated your life to the service of your people. Why don't you reform the miscreants and wean the wrongdoers when the storm of murders uproots the very being of their lives ?

GHAFFAR KHAN : I have challanged the British Government that if they only let me control that area I shall see that murders there will become a story of yesterday.

SELF : But why don't they let you do it ?

GHAFFAR KHAN : The Britishers, as you know, foster Hindu-Muslim disunity all over India, and then they parade its existence before the gullible world as an excuse for holding India in bondage. They prattle before the ignorant world that if they were to quit India, the land would be drenched in a vast pool of blood. The Hindus and Muslims they say would simply fly at each other's throat if the British bayonet that forces them to stand at a distance were withdrawn. In the Frontier Province as the so-called communal disunity could not exist, a new kind of disunity came into being. The Pathans began to fight among themselves. Then they tell the foreigners that the different sects and sections of the people are always at war with each other. Now you will understand more fully the meaning of the words political dacoities. If they let me control that particular area where the volcano of murders bursts out and I succeed in pacifying their raging passions by exposing the game of the British,

the latter would be digging the grave of their own rule.

SELF : The author says that a Pathan uses his rifle because it affords him the only means of self-expression. Is it true ?

GHAFFAR KHAN : I have not read this book but the author seems to possess a perverse mind. He is a shameless liar. Untruth runs in his veins like filth in a gutter. It is not for self-expression but for self-defence that a Pathan uses his rifle.

SELF : Is it a fact that the soldiers ask for leave to murder their enemy and if the leave is refused they become snipers ?

GHAFFAR KHAN : From where on earth did Nichols get these fantastic stories ?

SELF : A British officer was chaperoning the author in his tour of your province and Nichols quotes the words of the officer.

GHAFFAR KHAN : Then you know the source of this fabrication.

SELF : The author tells us that in your province the husband would kill his wife if she were found to have been guilty of adultery.

GHAFFAR KHAN : Not only the woman but the guilty man along with her is murdered. A Pathan has his own civilization and a European has his own. Wine and adultery are both regarded as heinous crimes. The only way to stop adultery is to subscribe capital punishment for it. A Pathan respects the honour of a woman more than his own

life. In the West a woman is just regarded as a means of pleasure and a lecherous object of joy. There is no fundamental respect for her person and no higher or sentimental regard for her honour. In the country of Nichols if the husband learns that his wife is having a good time with another man he just pretends that he knows nothing about it. And if he actually sees his wife being hugged and embraced by an outsider he just slips away like a mouse. But a Pathan will not tolerate such things.

SELF : The author makes us believe that homo-sexual love is rampant in your province and quotes the words of a colonel : “ Whenever we have a murder in our regiment we always begin by looking for the boy.”

(As I finished the sentence I saw his deep soft slanting eyes, which a moment back were calm and cool, burn like the wick of an oil lamp with a red and flaming anger. The word “ boy ” seemed to have ignited the wick.)

GHAFFAR KHAN : Nichols is nothing short of a devil let loose by the Tories to play havoc with Indian life. The truth of the matter is that a Pathan detests homo-sexuality as deeply as a Hindu detests beef-eating. But if there are stray cases it proves nothing. There are good and bad people everywhere.

I have known of Britishers encouraging some Pathans to fraternize with them on homo-sexual terms. Does this prove that the Britishers as a race are homo-sexual ? I am sure that the few Britishers

who take advantage of the poverty of the Pathans and tempt them to satisfy their abnormal propensities are abnormal people. They are not representative of their race.

(Khan's voice had risen but he calmed down and said that the subject was too revolting to pursue though he could quote chapter and verse. I left it at that.)

Nichols himself tells us in his book *News of England* P. 216 that while in England, "The increase in bigamy is two hundred per cent., in unnatural offences nearly three hundred per cent. *Since the First Great World War an Englishman is definitely getting more fond of boys.*" (Itals ours)

SELF : The author says that the Red Shirt organisation as its name implies has many Fascist tendencies.

GHAFFAR KHAN : You will be surprised to learn that it is the British Government which nicknamed our organisation—the Red Shirts. The Britishers wanted to poison the innocent mind of the Pathans by saying that it was a branch of the Communist Party of Russia. As our official uniform was Red, they used it as a patent proof of its secret affiliations with Bolshevik Russia. As the bogey of a Russian invasion in those days loomed large beyond the Indian frontiers, the British Government wanted to frighten the people by telling them that the enemy was already within their courtyard. Millions of leaflets to that effect were dropped down from aeroplanes in 1930 all over the province.

The original and the permanent name of our organisation is Khudai Khitmatgars, which means servants of God. It was a social body of selfless workers but gradually it developed into an economic and political body when in the end of 1930 we formally joined the Congress.

To-day there are some self-seekers who describe us as associates of Hindus and thus create misunderstandings between the Pathans and the rest of our Indian brothers. Where our Khudai Khitmatgar movement is political, it is social as well as spiritual. We are the servants of God and our chief aim is to serve all human beings irrespective of creed and colour. When God has given us one heart for the love of human beings, we should not split it into pieces to devote each piece separately to Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Jews and others. We are born brothers and we must live like brothers."

SELF : We are told by the British Government that if they withdraw from your province, the Pathans would murder the Hindus and the entire population of the Kaffirs will be liquidated.

GHAFFAR KHAN : It is no good rebutting this devilish lie with mere words. I will relate a story to expose the falsity of this base allegation. When Gandhiji was touring this province a few years ago, I took him to the Settled Districts. In a town populated by Pathans there were a few Hindu shop-keepers. Mind you, just a few. I stopped the rickety old lorry in front of a shop, and asked a shop-keeper if he had any grievances against the

local Pathans. The meek shop-keeper promptly replied in the negative and said that he was never maltreated but on the other hand the Pathans would occasionally ask him whether he was at home and comfortable in their town. Bowing his head in thankfulness to a crowd which had gathered he said : “ These men regard me as their guest. Their overflowing affection embarrasses me.” Gandhiji was satisfied that what he had been told by us was true.

You will be surprised to learn that the Pathans did not feel a bit proud of these compliments. They regard it as their moral duty to look after the Hindu brethren and the beauty of service lies in the joy of its performance. If its fulfillment engenders a feeling of pride its purity becomes tainted.

IV .

Towards the end of the long chapter on the Frontier, Beverley Nichols says that things are better in the Province and for this the credit goes to Sir George Cunningham.

As a man with a rollicking sense of humour and a youthful heart bubbling with the spirit of superfine sportsmanship, I agree with Nichols and, can vouchsafe from personal experience that he has very few rivals.

A few years back I went to play along with my friend Dhamija the N.W.F.P. Tennis Championships. In the third round I was drawn to play against Sir George Cunningham. Being a college student, I felt a bit self-conscious at the prospect of

playing against the Governor. A friendly warm hand-shake and a little pally chat put me at ease.

Let me admit that my childlike "nationalism" goaded me into making the white man run like a rabbit chased by bloodhounds. Curiously enough I deluded myself with the belief that I was thus extracting my toll of revenge for the wrongs that an Englishman perpetrates in India. The spectacle of his chasing the ball from one corner to the other was so "fascinating" that I would purposely prolong the rally even though I could score off the point by a sharp short cut. And let me admit that like a true sportsman he kept running. And I like a "budding patriot" made him run.

After the match was over he casually remarked that I had made him work and sweat too much. Hearing this, my face wreathed with smiles. And I had to use my handkerchief to hide them. At the prize-distribution, like a boy he said: "Though I am an old man but still I can play like a youth of 20. And mind you, I lost to Jag the winner of the tournament." Appreciating his dry sense of humour we all burst out into a hearty laughter.

One thing that fascinated me most was that he mixed with the people unmindful of any danger. He is perhaps the only Governor who has no love for the usual pomp and show. His life is simple; his ways informal and manners the least affected by snobbery.

Now comes the cardinal point: Who has made things better if the things are better in reality?

The wholesale presumption of the author that the Frontier is quieter is both false and groundless. The Province is seething with political discontent as much as it did before. All over the province, meetings are held to register their protest against the British policy. Processions are taken to warn the British Government that the Pathans will not take things lying down. Fiery speeches are made to tell the bureaucracy that the spirit of revolt is not dead in the heart of the Pathans. During the 1942 Revolution, the Frontier Province played its honourable part. The political movement was at its zenith during those days of trial and tribulation.

But in a way the Frontier has been quiet. There were less local internecine quarrels between the different sects and rival clans. Analysing like an impartial historian, we find that there are two reasons for these years of peace and good-will.

First, during the war days a peaceful atmosphere is a condition precedent for an effective prosecution of the war-effort. Civilian disturbances are bound to put the war machinery out of gear. So the Britishers stopped playing their role of fomenting trouble.

The second reason is the work and personality of the Khan Brothers. They have steadily and completely revolutionised the Pathan's outlook on life. By delivering the message of Non-violence they set before their Province new standards of chivalry. By practising it in their own lives, they

unfolded before their countrymen the panorama of true and higher values of life.

No other province has imbibed this life-giving doctrine more fully than the Frontier Province. The reason is as simple as the spectacle is astounding. Pathans are one of the bravest peoples. Their valour is the pride of India ; their spirit of sacrifice is the glory of the Frontier Province ; their chivalry to stand by the moral codes of warfare is the heritage of Islam. As Non-violence can be practised by those alone in whose hearts inborn intrepidity throbs, the Pathans were the people who could practise it to perfection. And verily they have lived up to the idealism of their uncrowned king. In the minutest details of its working, they have justified the boundless faith that the Khan Brothers reposed in them.

In 1930, squatting in the Qissa Khani Bazar, they faced the unceasing fusillade of Tommy Guns. They sat there as if pilgrims from far off countries had assembled. The Qissa Khani to them became an ancient shrine to offer their prayers, a place sanctified by the blood of their martyrs. For the time being it was as sacred as their Mecca and as holy as their Medina. One by one they saw their comrades dropping dead. The blood of their own kith and kin started flowing under their feet. The blood did not infuriate them. The word of honour given to their Leader to remain non-violent rang louder and louder in their ears. It pacified the stray feelings of revenge . . . it calmed every eruption

of anger . . . it made their determined minds more resolute.

Well, Nichols, *that is* the Pathan of your flippant quibs and desultory gibes.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Life of a Nurse

India is a land of facts and figures. Although they are about the people and of their life, the people themselves have no access to them. It is like the subject in a sentence having no access to the object !

These facts and figures are imprisoned in the dust-ridden and moth-eaten files that keep on mounting up in the Imperial Secretariat of New Delhi. If statistics had tongues, they would cry havoc. If they had the power of speech, they would inveigh against British injustice. The censorious invectives that they would hurl at the I.C.S. would stagger the self-complacent Mr. and Mrs. Smith. Though these facts and figures are speechless yet the guilty conscience of Britain shuts their mouths by tightening still more firmly the knots of the files that reluctantly hold them in their bosom.

But still every now and then these petrified "detenues," enlivened by the passion of a research scholar, peep from their graves and mutely whisper into his sharp ears the woeful tale of British administration in India. The facts like the prosecution counsel deliver the opening speech. The

figures turn by turn appear as the prosecution witnesses.

Here is a figure which in itself is a sad story of pain and suffering. Nichols tells us that, "there is only one trained nurse to every 65,000 Indians." Now like a hired witness, the author dumps the blame for this scarcity on the aggrieved party. Instead of taking a stand by the victim, his perverse mind starts accusing him. Instead of expressing sympathy, he jeers at the Hindus. Instead of betraying any grief, he tauntingly scoffs at their beliefs.

The reason for the dearth of nurses, the author derisively asserts, is to the deadening influence of the *Law of Karma*. In spite of his boast that he graced our country with his presence for a year and scampered from the Khyber Pass to "the off the track temple in Madras," he never cared to understand the origin and implications of this Law.

It is one of the explanations and a very rational explanation of certain indubitable facts of life. If you do not believe in the *Law of Karma*, you have to believe in a whimsical God who is responsible for endowing the human mind with evil, as well as good propensities. Nay, congenital blindness, deformity of limbs and brain, death of children and their suffering and similar other too apparent facts of life must be attributed to the caprice of the Creator. This theory is neither edifying nor rational. The *Law of Karma* helps us to form a just conception of the Moral Law governing the Universe.

Absence of the memory of past is no argument against it. We forget many things even in this life. But we cannot escape from their effects.

The *Law of Karma* is the counterpart in the moral world of the physical law of causation. The impressions of one's past life are held to be responsible for one's present tendency or conditions. But it must be clearly understood that man is not a mere automaton subject exclusively to mechanical laws. A man is potentially free and this freedom tries to manifest itself at every moment of his life. This freedom though covered by the integument of his past *Karma* never fails to produce the urge at every moment.

It is possible to build up more (better) *Karma* in this life by good deeds and *vice versa*. We find many a person born in princely families going to the dogs after a few years of licentious living, while on the other hand we find men born in destitute families sitting at the top of the ladder. The immoral deeds of the former negated the good of their past. The godly deeds of the latter erased the bad of their past. In the Divine Ledger the process of credit and debit goes on with scientific regularity and business-like precision. The best of past can be obliterated by the wicked before he realises that the cruel face of retribution stares him fiercely in the face.

In spite of the shackles of the *Law of Karma*, man has freedom of choice. Supposing I put my finger in a brazier full of glowing coal, I shall wince

with pain. According to Nichols I would quietly suffer and would rest content with resignation writ on my forehead and hands folded in abject submission to the *Law of Karma*. Well, it is a ludicrous exposition of the Law and a buffoonish explanation of its working.

Considering the back ground of the working of this Law, it smacks of insanity to suggest that a Hindu has no pity for pain. The author makes us believe that a Hindu attributes the origin of pain to the wickedness of the sufferer in his previous birth, so he takes no measures to remedy it nor seeks help to assuage it. This being the attitude of a Hindu according to Nichols, hence the appalling disparity between the population and the number of nurses. To substantiate his bizarre argument, the author comes forward with the fact that, "a large portion of the tiny corps of nurses is composed of Anglo-Indian girls, most of whom are Christians."

II

Now let us try to find out the real causes for this scarcity of nurses in India:

(A) The number of hospitals run both by the State and the private charitable trusts is infinitely small in proportion to the population of the country. Further the hospitals which engage nurses and train them are those which are in big towns. When the demand for nurses because of the smallness in number of hospitals is so meagre, the question of adopting nursing as a profession does not arise.

(B) But the critic would say : "Admitted

that the number of hospitals is very small, but the prevalence of disease in India is so appalling, that the patients must need the care and attention of a trained nurse."

This sentiment is perfectly logical. A man like Nichols could afford two nurses and pay them Rs. 20 for the day and Rs. 25 for the night. But can an average Indian whose per capita income is three annas a day pay four months' income to a nurse for 12 hours' attendance. These are facts and not just imaginary clap-traps. Not to speak of engaging a nurse, Indians are so poor that they dare not take medicine even. For it would mean starvation for a few days. What human being does not want to have the best medical aid? But what is he to do with three annas. Engage a nurse? I am sure an Anglo-Indian nurse would not let a patient *look* at her face for three annas!

(C) The pay of the Indian nurses on the average is shameful. While the American Sister gets Rs. 350 with everything found, her Indian prototype gets Rs. 35. But that is not all. The treatment meted to them is very shabby. Mr. Roome the learned Editor of *The Civil & Military Gazette*, wrote on November 22, 1945 :

"At one time, not so long ago, it would have been impossible to expect any large increase in the number of nurses in India because of the treatment of nurses in hospitals as only slightly better than menials."

(D) I seek forgiveness for the following

remarks which in spite of my best efforts not to pass I am forced to do by Nichols's mischievous insinuations.

Every youngman about the town who has money in his pocket and a smart suit to wear, knows from personal experience about the private character of these nurses. When the dusky haze of twilight starts drifting over the lingering remanants of sunshine, one sees cars and motor cycles arriving in quick succession at a local hospital. The waiting nurse jumps into the front seat or jumps on the pinion and they are off to Plaza for the first show . . . to Magnolia for Tooty-Frooty . . . to the Volga for Chicken a la Madan . . . and having been fed well the girl is taken for a drive to the Canal Bank and then . . . you *have* guessed right.

These evening escapades are not confined to a few solitary "bad" individuals. They are a part of the profession, a clock-like regular feature of their life. Euphemistically the disreputable practice is called : "an evening out."

When an Indian girl (but Nichols would like me to say a Hindu girl) thinks of joining this sacred profession, she passes a few restless nights tossing between the weltering waves of fear and shame. The grisly spectre that she shall have to live with these "respectable strumpets" scares her to death.

After a few days of objective thinking she sees her future in its true perspective and says to herself : "To hell with the spirit of humanitarianism if the selling of chastity is the ultimate price that I have

to pay for it.”

III

The author says that 50% of the tuberculosis cases in Peshawar are “due to the institution of *Purdah* . . . it is a costume quite ideal for the incubation of microbes.”

Before making this fantastic statement, Nichols should have known that *Burqa* is worn by the Muslim women when they move out of their houses. Not for a minute is it worn at home. The Muslim women being comparatively more conservative go about the town not very often. Hardly for five or six hours in a WHOLE WEEK they hide their faces. Now is it not blatantly grotesque to suggest that the innocent *Burqa* is responsible for 50% cases of tuberculosis in Peshawar ?

The three fundamental causes for the frightening prevalence of this disease are :

- (a) Malnutrition due to pauper-like poverty.
- (b) Ill-built houses (perhaps dungeons is the proper word).
- (c) No facilities for the city population for any kind of mental recreation and physical exercise.

If Nichols had spent a night in the city houses where human beings are huddled up some how or other (necessity is the mother of invention), and made to live like pigeons in narrow holes, he would have begged for priority to fly back HOME.

India is so acutely famished that from the hollow cheeks of its teeming millions monotonously

ring the gnawing pangs of an hungry stomach. Their sunken and lustreless eyes stare at John Bull like a strangled ghost. On their parched skin are written the words in screaming headlines : "Oh, you greedy British, leave at least the husk for us." But Britain takes away even the husk to send *Force* in return.

To millions the sight of eating two full meals a day just tickles their fancy. It has no reality in their lives . . . no meaning in their language. A pinch of salt is all the butter that they fondly strew on their dry coarse bread . . . an onion is their main dish and a little piece of *gur* their sweet.

Such is the shocking existence of "the elusive Indian." Instead of showing sympathy and whipping the conscience of his countrymen to right the wrong, the author fire squads the moving mummies with all sorts of trenchant remarks and rancorous accusations. His raillery and banter is a curious mixture of malice and cynicism.

IV

The author says that aged drones and screaming babies all sleep in the same room where the patient after the operation is resting. It is true that an unnecessary and a large number of relations and friends come to enquire about the patient's progress but they dare not disturb the patient let alone pack the small room like the humming bees in a bee-hive. Such a ludicrous statement only amuses the reader.

The so-called Hindu joint family system

which the author waxes his wrath is a replica of the hoary past. If its languishing body does struggle for life in a few orthodox families, it never enjoins upon the family members to turn the patient's room into a joint family common bed-room. I have never heard of this sinister practice.

The author's reproduction of the statement of of his nurse that even an operation for appendicitis is not allowed to be performed on auspicious days is both imaginary and chimerical. Nichols must have been wriggling with pain in his infected foot and the clever nurse was trying to divert his mind by telling him such fanciful stories. But as the inquisitive author was doing "an intensive study of modern India," he noted down in the pages of his memory all that was said to him.

I am sure if the nurse were to read her words taken so seriously she would laugh the most. Little did she know that her balderdash would be quoted as a fact from everyday Indian life.

CHAPTER SIX

You asked for it, Nichols

Arrogance is a hideous sin. But spiritual arrogance is treason against morality. Arrogance breeds exclusiveness. Exclusiveness may flaunt the seeming triumph of separate and superior existence, but its success is as temporary as that of the foolish water drop which tears itself away from the ocean and parades its higher individual status. The cruel heat annihilates it. In a twinkling of an eye the haughty drop disappears into nothingness.

Men are prone to believe that they are the special favourites of their deities, that their God or gods have given a true religion to them and not to any other people. Further, they delude themselves with the conviction that supernatural and infallible inspiration has been vouchsafed to their prophets and religious teachers but not to the prophets and religious teachers of another land.

The vicious circle keeps on expanding with feverish rapidity. They fondly regard their own sacred books as true and divine revelations but say that the sacred books of others are a hotch-potch of fear, dream and illusion. If there is something good and sublime in them they regard it as the influence of their own religion. From pulpits and platforms thunders the jargon that the way of salvation which their teachers showed is the only true and safe path.

This kind of thinking that one's own religion is a repository of all the divine wisdom that ever descended from heavens is admittedly fissiparous. It has always prevented religious brotherhood. It has always prevented the different parts of humanity from becoming one. And so long as this attitude of derision, scepticism and blasphemy continues, so long will hatred, jealousy and quarrels persist.

Happily, little by little, the broader view is dawning on men's minds that notwithstanding the many names, the power and wisdom that is over us all is ONE. Day by day, the fanatic mind, surcharged with egoism and prejudice, is made to believe by the wisdom of experience that God has not got any special favourites. Nepotism to God is as foreign as it is to a physician in his treatment of his patients. The doctor gives the same medicine irrespective of the patient's race or religion.

The worst of bigots are goaded into believing that all men, in some true deep sense, are God's children, that His Providence embraces all lands and peoples, and that His inspiration is not confined to any one age or race. It is proclaimed by men who are endowed with broader vision that His revelation is larger than any single book or set of books and embraces all Truth; that He has raised up prophets, saints and teachers of righteousness in all lands; that no religion has a right to claim that it alone is true and others false.

The world needs religions that appreciate one another's excellences; which are quick to find grounds of unity; which are eager to co-operate. Religions

that are blind to one another's merits, that fight and antagonise, condemn themselves by that very fact. The universal need is for religions of good-will, religions that propagate themselves not by the sword, by antagonism or controversy, but by the beauty and self-evident quality of their truth, by the elevation and purity of their ethics, by the breadth and kindliness of their spirit, and by the excellence of their good works. As such faiths spread and take possession of men's hearts, wars will become impossible, hatred and bigotries will pass away, antagonisms will cease. Men will learn to walk together hand in hand as brothers, and peace will come to this distracted earth.

II

Our friend Nichols, who is a personification of bigotry and fanaticism, disdainfully jeers at the very idea of the Universality of Religion. While the human orchestra strives for a symphony, the music and harmony of which would make peoples of all lands embrace each other, Nichols's clownish jabbering tries to turn it into a bedlam of discordant noises.

Further, he has the audacity to ridicule a savant like Romain Rolland whom the Christian world hails as the modern St. Francis of Ipi. I am sure that it is not because of his faith in the Universality of Religion, but because of his admiration for Gandhi, that Romain Rolland becomes the target of Nichols's poison-dipped arrows.

The author is so much obsessed with the idea of the unimpeachable superiority of Christianity

that Hinduism is to him a sluggish stream of filth and mud. He is so much enamoured of Christianity that like the Oracle of Delphi he says: "Men *cannot* advance, except towards Christ. He is at the end of every road that leads uphill towards the light." Being under the hallucination that Christianity is the truest religion, he loses his balance of mind and throws an open challenge: "If it prompts any Indian to retort with an exposure of the faults of Christianity, so much the better. We could do with the lesson."

When I started writing this chapter, I had not the faintest idea that I should be prodding the weak spots of Christianity. My sole object was to remove the misgivings of the author about my own religion. But in this age of high-pressure propaganda any charge that is not refuted is deified as Truth itself; any challenge that is not accepted is interpreted as an admission of defeat. If I were to ignore this open challenge of Nichols I am certain he would boast: "Look, I invited all Hindus to attack Christianity as mercilessly as they could, but they have not. How can they when our religion is infallible in origin and perfect in conception? This clap-trap of respect for other religions is utter nonsense and a Hindu way of wriggling out of a tight corner."

In spite of my best efforts to desist from a duel of mud-slinging, the crooked way in which the mind of the author works leaves me no choice.

III

All Christians have built their faith on the

factuality of the Resurrection of Christ. St. Paul himself categorically stated that "If Christ be not risen from the dead, then their faith is vain." In other words this theory of Resurrection is the very foundation on which is built the strong-walled and beautifully painted mansion of Christianity. Now if by research it can be established that the much-vaunted fact of Resurrection is a myth and its much-boasted historical veracity a vain-glorious brag, the natural, though, disagreeable, conclusion will be that the magnificent edifice of Christianity is built on sands as slippery as the eel.

At the outset let me clear one thing. What is challenged is not the existence of Jesus but the historicity of the Jesus of the Gospels. The Jesus of history is different from the Jesus of the Gospels as well as from the Jesus of the Church. The latter two are no more than creations of the needs and dictates of times. They are no more than mythological personalities to fire the imagination of the people. But all the same it must be constantly borne in mind that, even if it is proved, as I shall try to, that the Jesus of Gospels is an outlandish fabrication, it does not necessarily mean that Jesus did not exist at all.

The meaning of Resurrection according to (Hornac : *The Expansion Vol. 1, Page 91*) is: "The resurrection of the flesh," that is "the departure of the *resuscitated body from the grave.*" (Weiz—Sacker : *The Apostolic Age : Vol. 1, Page 4*).

Great credit goes to Jesus's followers for the unbending steel-like faith that they reposed in their Master. He had like a prophet proclaimed that the Kingdom of Heaven would grace the world within a generation. But much to the dismay and bitter disappointment of his followers, nothing of the kind happened. The pious wish remained a dream and the cherished reality but an intensive longing of the heart. But his followers did not give up hope. They pinned their faith in his prophetic utterance. The feeling that it must come proved a veritable obsession on their minds. It had to come, it was their wish. The embarrassing question that puzzled their innocent minds was that, as Jesus was dead, who would herald the heavenly dawn of the New Age? "No, no, he was not dead." With the ceaseless chanting of these hope-giving words they hypnotised themselves with the belief that *actually* he was not dead. As he alone could usher in the Kingdom of God he must rise again. This "supreme will to believe" was the fountain head which spread the flood of rumour and legend of Resurrection.

Let us quote the highest authority *Encyclopaedia Biblica Col. 4040*. Prof. P.W. Schmiedel observes :

" We find that the Resurrection of Jesus in view of the supernatural character, is in very many quarters, and with growing distinctness, characterised as unhistorical and that not merely when it is conceived of as having been a revivification of the dead body of Jesus, but also when it is defended on spiritualistic grounds."

And what does Paul himself say about this Resurrection :

“ He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep ; then he appeared to James ; then to all the apostles and last of all, as unto once born out of due time he appeared to me also.” *I. Cor. XV. 5-8.*

According to Paul, the first appearance was to Cephas, that is Peter. But painful it is to say that it is contradicted by the Gospels. Here are the contradictions :—

1. In the genuine portion of Mark nothing is said about the appearance. According to the interpolated portion (XVI. 9-20) Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene.

2. According to the version of Matthew the first appearance was to two women.

3. According to John's testimony, it was to Mary Magdalene.

4. The account of Luke is conflicting (XXIV. 13-34). In the morning of that day no one saw him rise from the grave. There was a talk among the disciples on the subject. Then Cleopas and another disciple started for Emmaus—a village at a distance of seven or eight miles. Jesus, it is said, accompanied them. They had a long talk with one another. But still the disciples could not recognise him. The reason given by Luke is that “ Their eyes were

holden, that they should not know him." Then they reached Emmaus. "Then it came to pass when he had sat down with them to meal, he took the bread and blessed it and broke and gave to them. And their eyes were opened and they knew him and he had vanished out of sight." Then they returned to Jerusalem and there heard that Jesus appeared to Peter.

Without saying anything about the possibility or impossibility of miracles, we simply ask here :

To whom did he appear first ? To Peter or to Cleopas and his companion ?

If we assume that the embodied Jesus was with Cleopas and his companion, the same embodied Jesus could not have been with Peter, unless there was another miracle. What Peter saw must have been a vision.

Then we see that Paul's first assertion cannot be substantiated but in fact is contradicted by the Gospels.

Then Paul says that he appeared to the twelve. But there were not twelve. They were only eleven. Matthew was chosen long after. Here also Paul cannot be relied on.

He then says that Jesus appeared to five hundred. This also was unknown to the Evangelists.

Then he says that Jesus appeared to the apostles. Who are they ? What is the distinction between the " twelve " and " all the apostles ? " Paul commits a mistake here also.

Last but not the least, Jesus appeared to Paul. But Paul never saw Jesus. How then could he identify him ?

Thus we see that Paul is a thoroughly unreliable witness.

Again, " Paul was very prone to visions and other ecstatic conditions."

Dr. Percy Gardiner says :

" It is easy to prove that he (Paul) has no sufficient perception of the distinction between that which is within and that which is without, between the ethical and the physical."

Exploratio Evangelica, Page 100.

A man who cannot distinguish between the physical and psychical cannot be a reliable witness for a post-mortem appearance. If he truly says that Jesus appeared to him, this appearance must be called a vision.

Weizscher says : " But no proof is to be got from this for a bodily Christophany." *The Apostolic Age*, Vol. 1 Page 6.

Bishop Westcott says :

" For us the appearance to St. Paul would certainly in itself fail to satisfy in some respects the conditions of historic realities—it might have been an internal revelation—but for him it was essentially objective and outward." *Gospel of the Resurrection*, Page 109.

From all this mass of evidence we arrive at the conclusion :

(a) The appearance of Jesus mentioned by Paul is disapproved by the Gospels.

(b) The evidence of a visionary cannot be accepted.

And further what sort of man is Paul? I will not comment but let Nichols give his opinion. Here is a paragraph culled from his book *The Fool Hath Said* (page 223) :—

“ And once again I find myself in agreement with Bernard Shaw, whose words could hardly be bitter: ‘ Paul was no more a Christian than Jesus was a Baptist: he does nothing that Jesus could have done, and says nothing that Jesus would have said, though much, like the famous ode to charity, which he could have admired.’ ”

(c) When Paul never saw Jesus when the latter was alive how could he identify the same Jesus when he appeared after death ?

(d) Matthew writes :

“ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. When they saw him, they worshipped, but some doubted.”

Had it been the appearance of resuscitated Jesus, not even one of his disciples could have doubted. Even Mary could not recognise him when she stood weeping at the sepulchre and he appeared to her in the garden.

Considering all these facts we are led to the conclusion that the story of the Resurrection is a legend. A Resurrection is a supernatural event and

to prove its reality, there must be strong evidence, first to overcome the immense probability against it and then to establish its actuality.

If in our time similar assertions were made regarding a similar case and similar evidence was produced what would a court of competent judges (Nichols being not there to give his verdict) pronounce the case to be? Their unanimous verdict would certainly be—NOT PROVEN.

Death is stronger than life. Jesus loved his followers, but in the hours of trial, they denied and forsook him. What can be more pathetic than this? After his death, the disciples must have reviewed their whole past and the whole past must have surged up in their hearts and completely overwhelmed them. How bitterly did they weep, how repentant were their tears. They felt themselves helpless; they met together, they thought of him, they spoke of him. The more they thought and spoke of him, the more they felt convinced that he, their master, friend and saviour did not forsake them. He was with them. This thought sustained and inspired them and they were thus filled with the spirit of Jesus.

It can be thus asserted that each Gospel was written with a theological purpose. The subject of each evangelist was not to give true historical facts but to write, manufacture and create what would strengthen his theological position.

IV

After reading this boring chapter, the irritated Nichols would say: "Look here, you uncharitable

tic, you have in your Hindu *way* tried to establish that the faith of Christians is vain. Now how do you reconcile the two contradictory things : Christianity based on fraud flourishing with the vigour of youth."

Dear Nichols, mere flourishing proves nothing. Look at your British Empire. It is based on fraud, deceit and unscrupulousness, but still it flourishes. In spite of the deadening incubus of guile and craft it is growing in stature and broadening in volume.

But Nichols would retort : " It is cruel to draw a parallel from the British Empire. It is but another instance of the fact that Hindus have no pity for pain. You hurt my religious susceptibilities and instead of assuaging them you start wounding my faith in the glorious work that my selfless and humanitarian ancestors have been doing for you Hindus.

" Now tell me: What about the Christian martyrs who suffered untold persecution for their faith in Christ ? They were not a set of fools."

Nichols, you are a very well-read man. You have travelled a lot. You must know that blind faith makes a timid man bold. It turns cowards into heroes. Martyrdom does not in itself prove the truth of a belief.

Further may I repeat your argument and say that among non-Christian sects, whose faith is the object of your ridicule, there have been scores of martyrs, but still you assert that their religion is a hotch-potch of dream, fears and illusion. If you want your martyrs to be respected you must pay

homage to the martyrs of other religions. If you draw on their unique sacrifices to prove the truth of your religion, you must not spit at the blood spilt by our heroes to whom faith meant more than life itself; whose sacrifices are our heritage; whose fearlessness our inspiration, and whose noble deeds our history.

Personally, I have as much respect for the *Bible* as I have for the *Gita*. Christianity is as dear to me as is Hinduism. When I study Christianity I do it with the devotion of a Christian. When I meditate over its teachings, I do so with the deep philosophic calmness of a humble seeker. And therein lies the secret of correct and intelligent understanding. This attitude works as a *sesame* that flung open the gates of divine wisdom in every religion. Every religion has had its own messengers, who brought solace to mankind in dejection, hope to the world in despair, salvation to the penitant sinner.

P.S. This chapter is ment only for Nichols, for he sees the essence of the entire Truth in the universe distilled in the phial of Christianity, which he carries in his pocket to administer a dose from it to the diseased Hindus.

My request to my Christian readers is to ignore this chapter and tear off these few pages. My request to Nichols is to read and re-read them till the nonsense of the "only true religion" is knocked out of his swollen head.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Political Cannibalism

Beverley Nichols throughout his chapter on Hinduism behaves like a lunatic. He hurls stones of accusation against our deities. He spits on our sacred books. And sardonically grins at the sublimity of our ancient teachings.

To him Hinduism is like a malignant cancer which is insidiously affecting the life and growth of India. Look at his sweeping generalization:

“The fact that she (India) is so singularly weak in the type of selfless characters, who brighten the pages of Western History, is not due to any flaw in the Indian character, it is due to the deadening influence of Hinduism.”

This observation is so patently absurd that one does not feel like taking it seriously. But since it has been made after a “year’s intensive study of modern India,” we are expected to regard it as the opinion of a research scholar. It is the voice of his experience and the conclusion of his observation. So let us thrash it out.

Looking beyond the Eastern frontiers of India we find that the basis of Western civilisation is gross materialism. And when we look at our own civilisation we find that in renunciation it has its strong roots. This doctrine of renunciation so

deeply influences the Indian mind that it is dubbed as a fault unto itself. While a typical Westerner is helplessly caught in the serpentine coil of insatiable greed, a typical Oriental is free from these entanglements.

These observations are of a general character. Scores of instances quoted from Indian life to prove the wrongness of our presumptions do not damage the correctness of their sum-total.

Picking up the threads of our argument we find that selfless service can only be practised by a person whose ambitions are not controlled by the lust of material wants, whose mind is not swayed by irrepressible longings for bodily comforts and whose values of life are not governed by the number of luxuries that he enjoys.

In the world of spiritualism and service, where the winds of humanitarianism alone refresh the life of all, a greedy materialistic mind is like the heavy contaminated air that hangs over the stagnant pool and pollutes everything that comes near it.

Taking another simile, we find that, in the very nature of things, selfless characters germinate in the rich and fertile soil of renunciation. The desire to serve without any ulterior motives waters the tender plant. People whom they serve bring in basketsfuls of thanksgiving which serve as manure for the growth of the plant. In every city we find rows of such gigantic trees. Under the soothing shade of these paternal trees, weary travellers seek refuge and shelter.

On the other hand, can a civilisation which openly professes and stands for the multiplication of wants, and works frantically for their immediate satisfaction, produce selfless characters? The chilly and bitter blast of materialism kills any stray seedling of selfless service that may pierce the soil and look towards the light for life and sustenance.

Are the politicians of the West, who are supposed to have dedicated their lives to their country, selfless characters? To hail them as luminaries that brighten the pages of Western history is often an exaggeration. To rush forward to drink deep at the fountain of their service is like running to a mirage to quench one's thirst.

Is it not a fact that many of the politicians of the West, who steer the wheels of their country's destiny, are business magnates controlling a chain of prosperous business concerns? And further, can anyone deny that the politics of the West are mostly dictated by financiers and capitalists? Politics to them are, but for striking exceptions, not a medium of service but a practical means for amassing more wealth.

The silken glove of service hides the iron fist that twists and twines for an opportunity to strike the head of the poor labourers. Politicians support the rich against the poor; they are little better than cannibals. The phantom of fear separates the poor from the rich. The ferocity of suspicion widens the gulf.

It is undoubtedly true that a few selfless characters do flash across the Western sky

darkened by the stormy and sombre clouds of individualism. Their light reaches the Eastern hemisphere as well. We benefit by their radiance. The stories of their service and sufferings reach us through the printed word. We kneel before their sincerity and pay homage to their determination. But Lenins, Lincolns and Romain Rollands are as rare as diamonds in the Kholapur mines.

Nichols himself lets his own country down when on page 25 of *News of England* he says:

“ A land (referring to England) whose people are fat, foolish and ignorant, is no fit breeding ground for heroes.”

Now let us turn our envious eyes into every strata of life in our own country. And what comforting scenes we see! What inspiring spectacles we behold!

In India, and India alone, we see thousands of young educated men who have discarded the comforts of their homes. With one sharp stroke they cut the knot of their family ties. They condemn sensuous joys. Quietly these young men settle down in remote and lonely villages. Patiently they merge themselves in the life of the needy and forlorn villagers. Unmindful of the irksome lack of comfort, they sweat to awaken the moving corpses from the petrifying stupor of their helplessness. Unconcerned with the desire for the recognition of their service, they grind themselves between the mill-stones of voluntary poverty and periodical confinements in jails.

Their life is so solitary and their love for service so self-effacing that most of the Indians themselves, whose eyes are dazzled by the glittering glamour of city life, do not see their glowing personalities. I am not surprised that Nichols did not bump into a selfless character.

As regards the highlights, name any Congressite and you are confronted with an automatic refutation of this slanderous malediction. Gandhi is an incarnated deity of selfless service. Nehru, a born prince and brought up in the lap of luxury, is a symbol of the abjurement of every worldly comfort that nature in its rare moments of munificence bestowed upon this man. Rajendra Prasad is a living reality of the time-honoured ideal : " Country before the family." The life and work of Patel is the quintessence of our glorious heritage : " The service of one's countrymen is nobler than the love of one's sons and daughters." The ennobling and chaste personality of " C. R." is a divine sermon to men of letters that the only sacred use of intellect is its immediate transformation for the uplift of the downtrodden.

All these godly men rolled in wealth. It was open to them to lead a life of comfort. But with what heart could they ignore and resist the plaintive moans of Mother India. Destitute and humbled as she is, piteously she stretches her trembling arms. The filial chord of affection reverberates. Patriotism re-echoes the Call. Men after men disdain and spurn the comforts of life. The beguiling pleadings

of egoism are brushed aside. The seductive smiles of ambition are ignored.

Impetuously they rush into the longing arms of Mother India. Tears of repentance flow like rivulets down their cheeks. For the transitory neglect, forgiveness is supplicated. Mother India hugs her noble sons. Their craven past having been forgiven, the children of the soil arise. Animated by the joy of service they march to the post of their Duty. One can hear enthusiasm surging in their hearts as one hears the waves in a stormy sea.

As long as they live, they serve their people as selflessly as the oil serves the flame. And when the Clock of Time strikes, they disappear into some unknown and untraceable Valley of Eternity. But the inspiring memory of their deeds rises every day with the dawn. It shines in every ray of the daylight. And as the swarthy mantle of dusk creeps over the mountain brows, reflecting the heavy and golden light of the setting sun, we see it in the russet twilight that lingers on the fringe of the day. And when the tireless sun bids adieu to our world to light the other worlds, we see the soft effulgence of their service in the light of the stars.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Spirit of Hinduism

THE author feels grieved that “Hinduism has no Church, no Pope, no Bible, but most important of all, no History.”

Needless to say, Hinduism is not an off-shoot of modern times or even of times over which human memory may claim jurisdiction. But all the same in spite of its hoary origin, it is as gigantic in size and as mysterious as the Himalayas.

Hinduism is untraceable in origin, vast in conception and comprehensive in its idealism. *Its centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere*

The Statesman reviewing *Verdict on India* wrote :

“Nor is it clear to anybody with the slightest trace of mysticism in his make-up why Hinduism should be pooh-poohed because it has no basis in history. Some think that an advantage.”

As we look back on the past of nations, we observe that civilisations after civilisations have been swept away into oblivion by the merciless Broom of Time. Creeds have arisen from men's brains and flourished with all the vitality of youth, only to be placed as curios of antiquity in the Museum of Beliefs. Now and again *isms* in all their dazzling brilliance flash across the horizon of idealism. The white-light burns awhile, but the avalanche of antagonistic world forces falls in all its ferocity and destroys it. Before the deeper significance of these *isms* is fully grasped by mankind, the delirious frenzy of the tempest quells its light.

What are empires but the bright bubbles that rise and burst on the silent and swift waters of space ? India witnessed the procession of mighty empires from the white-crowned heights of the eternal Himalayas. She saw them pass away like phantoms of the night through the valley of shadows into the darkness beyond. And still India endures ; she has bowed her head before the blast and she has heard the legions thunder past ; she has been bereft of her liberty ; she is beset with many evils of her own making, yet she has retained through it all that which makes for strength of true religious life—*her treasure of thought and tradition.*

Through all the centuries and centuries of humiliation and bondage she has held fast to her priceless heritage, the wisdom that has come down

the ages, the catholicity of tolerance, the broad and gentle outlook on life, the simplicity that is the salt of life. In the dim and remote past, India did not build on dust, neither did she put her trust in "reeking tube and iron shard." As she built in the past so will she build in the future on the rock of humility and faith.

This explains the incredible and inexhaustible vitality of India. She has had to bend her back under the yoke, but there is no decadence of the kind that has led to the complete disappearance of so many great nations. Where are the glittering spires of Babylon? Vanished is the splendour of Egypt. The hundred-gated Thebes is a legend. The halls of the Pharoahs have disappeared into the bowels of the earth. Where shall we look for the glory that was Greece, the pomp and pride that was Rome?

But India's profound religiousness has buoyed her up on the waters of oblivion, while other nations have sunk down the depths. This is also the reason why in spite of the weight of years and the loss of freedom there is no sterility of intellect and spirit in India. Saints and sages have appeared at all times. Great religious teachers have compelled the admiring homage of the West. The fame of an Indian poet has encircled the world and a prophet *has* appeared to deliver his inspired message to mankind heading for perdition . . .

II

The magnificent and gigantic fort of Hinduism stands erect in all its majesty. And it will stand and defend the soul of India till God decides to liquidate our tiny globe. And why has it stood the relentless ravages of Time ? Divine revelations are its foundations, the penance of our saints its bricks and the blood of our martyrs it, cement.

The storm of religious fanaticism blew from the North, but left the fort unscathed. From the East the lava of racial prejudice entered the Bay of Bengal. It seemed that the strongest steel would bend and the hardest stone would melt before its atomic heat. But its pernicious designs were foiled.

It is true that a number of insignificant hovels were built around the castle of Hinduism by theologians. But to call them the main building itself is a travesty of the truth. It is also true that a few creepers of malpractices were planted around this fort by evil minded people. But to call this weedy growth the walls of Hinduism is to belie the testimony of History itself.

Every phase of religious experience from Eusebians to the authors of *God the Invisible* and *Back to Methuselah*, every kind of rite and custom associated with sacred places, even the miraculous healings at Lourdes, the play at Oberammergan and the Cult of the Child, seem to have been anticipated in the vast emporium of religion in India before it arose in the West.

There is the story of Hanumat kicking a loathsome beggar and the latter finding a wound on the God's breast : " What you do to my children, you do to me." We find Nilyanada with blood flowing from a gash in his brow made by a drunkard's blow, crying : " Strike me again, only do it in Krishna's name." We read of saints who washed the clothes of their disciples and a master who bathed their feet.

But Nichols does not know anything about them. He asserts point blank in his book, *The Fool Hath Said* page 155 : " The miracles in Christianity are totally unlike anything that has occurred in the world before or since."

The Christians have only to glance upon the religious state of their country from the time when Odin and Thor were struggling with the Cross introduced by S. Augustine to the time when the Cross triumphant was passing an Act of Uniformity and legalising intolerance and persecution and compare it with the fundamental practice of good-will among the Hindus. No Christian can ever come to India but in the humble attitude of a learner.

But Nichols dismisses the entire philosophy of Hinduism as a " hotch-potch of almost every fear, dream and delusion." Throughout this chapter on Hinduism he tries to establish the correctness of his conclusion and the impartiality of his *verdict*. He distorts the inner meanings of our teachings and mis-interprets the often symbolic message of

our sacred books. To him the dishonesty of means is of little consequence. So long as they serve and help him in building his thesis he does not care a bit about the impropriety of his methods.

III

Christianity believes one man to be the Son of God and his teachings are embodied in the *New Testament*. But Hinduism has many. They were sent as prophets according to the exigencies of the times and the needs of mankind. These prophets ordained rules of conduct as God decreed. They spread and propagated the eternal message of Truth in the manner their Master chose for them.

Ramayan is the life story of Ram who crossed the borders of India and went all the way to Lanka (Ceylon) to crush the savage rule of tyranny that was ravaging mankind.

Then we have an illimitable store-house of knowledge embalmed in the four *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are so ancient that their source still baffles the research scholar. The opaque mist of uncertainty still enshrouds the date of their origin. Let us see what Max Muller, the great Indologist, says about them.:

“The *Vedic* literature opens to us a chapter in what has been called the education of the human race to which we can find no parallel ELSEWHERE.”

Can anybody deny that great thinkers of the West like Emerson, Thoreau and Neitzche have

drawn their inspiration from the *Vedantic* doctrines and the philosophy of the *Upanishads* ?

Then we have the *Gita*. This book, by the way, is most popular in India and abroad as well. It is a sacred discourse given by Lord Krishna on the battle-field of Kurekhshetra. The *Gita* gives a wonderful synthesis of different aspects of human thought. It shows that different phases of human nature, for instance, active, emotional, psychic or intellectual, if properly guided by reason and understanding, ultimately lead to the realisation of the Highest Truth. The *Gita* gives the philosophy of work which is of inestimable value to everyone in the world. All of us work but very few know of its secret which lies in the disinterested attitude of the worker. The *Gita* exhorts everyone to look upon himself as the Eternal and Immutable *Atman* and this can be realised if we perform our duty for the sake of duty, love others for the sake of love and acquire knowledge for the sake of knowledge.

But, unfortunately, to Nichols "at best it leads to morbid introspection, at worst to gross indulgence." May I ask this mis-interpreter in what chapter or verse the doctrine of indulgence is enunciated ? It is just the opposite. Renunciation is the silken woof of which the fabric of *Gita* teachings is woven. Desirelessness is the warp that unites together the different threads.

Where there is body there must be action. Every

action is tainted. It is the innate desire of the living man that his action should be free from the blot of sin that defiles its inherent purity. The *Gita* prescribes the ineffable remedy in the following words :

“ By desireless action, by renouncing the fruits of action, by dedicating all activities to God *i.e.* by surrendering oneself to Him, body and soul.”

Action, whether physical or mental, is inevitable in the struggle of life. But at the same time the supreme necessity to be free from the bondage of action is recognised as a moral duty. The *Mother Gita* solves the intricate problem in a simple human way :

“ Do your allotted work but renounce its fruits . . . be detached and work . . . have no desire for reward and work.”

The common, everyday practice of hankering after the immediate fruits of one's action is the root cause of all maladies and malpractices. When a man's mind is swayed by a passion to possess and enjoy the reward of his effort, the sanctity of means is sacrificed at the altar of expediency. Speaking from a purely scientific and practical point of view, the devotion and zeal that must needs be harnessed in the prosecution of the ultimate goal itself will be tainted by haste, and nervousness. Will not these two negative factors affect the positivity of the action itself ?

Is not then the *Gita* a book of "practical politics?" If its theme were abstruse, it would not have been handed down from one generation to another. If its doctrines were not of a universal character it would not have evoked the admiration of Western thinkers. If its teachings were a hotch-potch of abstract dogmas, it would not have become the spiritual dictionary of millions.

How "for the ordinary sinner it is full of dangers" is beyond my comprehension. Is the doctrine of desirelessness a path which is strewn with suicidal man-holes? The practice of detachment brings that peace of mind and creates that serene harmony in man's outlook on life that saints in heaven may envy.

"It denies the need of grace," so says Nichols now. Are you not invoking the final need of grace by leaving the fruits of your action to the Maker Himself? By renouncing the desire for reward of your action are you not recognising the existence of a Supreme Authority over your head?

Concluding his ranting harangue on the *Gita*, the author says :

"An average man is not a casket of imprisoned splendour but of base and selfish instincts, hence this book is useless to him as is oxygen to a mummy." (Itals ours). Perhaps the working of human nature, as the author sees in his own country, has injected this bacilli of despair in his veins. Further, if *Verdict on India* is in any sense a reflection of the values of life which govern his mind, then this

sweeping generalisation as regards the low tendencies of human nature is an elongation of the *base* instincts that prompted him to throw filth on the fair face of India.

IV

Nichols flings into our face the pungent retort that in Hinduism there is no simple truth that embodies in itself the entire spirit of Hinduism. Islam has its *Kalma*. And Christianity in the *Bible* has *John* Chapters 3—16. Is there something in a nutshell which contains the very essence of Hinduism and will answer the demands of the most philosophical among the Hindus or the most matter-of fact-among them. Well, here is *the* answer.

The first verse in the *Ishopanishad* is all comprehensive. Even if the massive literature that guards in its bosom the tenets of Hinduism were burnt to ashes, this solitary verse would keep on shining. It will help with the experience of a guide and serve with the sincerity of a friend.

In the following translation of the verse not only the spirit of Hinduism is compressed but the WISDOM OF RELIGION itself :

“ God the ruler pervades all there is in this universe. Therefore, renounce and dedicate all to him and then enjoy or use the portion that may fall to thy lot. Never covet anybody’s possessions.”

All the other *Mantras* of the ancient *Upanishads* are a commentary or an attempt to amplify the

deeper significance of this truth. Nichols, who is an apologist of the British Empire and a keen supporter of the crumbling capitalist system, will probably see the doctrine of fatalism unlocked by this Golden Key. But will any Socialist deny that it fails to satisfy the cravings of his life-time? The acceptance of this philosophy of the *Mantra* by his countrymen means the fulfillment of his political longings. Its practice by them will mean the realisation of his class-less idealism.

I let Gandhiji, in his own inimitable language, render the inner meaning of this *Mantra* more clear, if clarity of the simple, plain and straight forward truth is needed :

“ You need not take anything in Hinduism which is inconsistent with or contrary to the meaning of this *Mantra*. What more can a man in the street want to learn than this—that the one God and Creator and Master of all that lives pervades the Universe? The three other parts of the *Mantra* follow directly from the first. If you believe that God pervades everything, that He has created you, you must believe that you cannot enjoy anything that is not given by Him. And seeing that He is the Creator of His numberless children, it follows that you cannot covet anybody’s possession. If you think that you are one of His numerous creatures, it behoves you to renounce everything and lay it at His feet. That means the act of renunciation of everything is not a mere physical renunciation

but represents a second or new birth. It is a deliberate act, not done in ignorance. It is therefore a regeneration. And then since he who holds the body must eat and drink and clothe himself, he must naturally seek all that he needs from Him. And he gets it as a natural reward of that renunciation. As if this was not enough, the *Mantra* closes with this magnificent thought : ‘ Do not covet anybody’s possession.’ The moment you carry out these precepts you become a wise citizen of the world; living at peace with all that lives. It satisfies one’s highest aspirations on this earth and hereafter. No doubt it will not satisfy the aspirations of him who does not believe in God and His undisputed sovereignty.”

The above-mentioned *Mantra* is the corner-stone of Hinduism, but Nichols, true to his ignoble nature, refused to lay his hands on beliefs that are fundamental. He took a little interpolation here and an insignificant prejudice there and cleverly knitted them to give the impression to an innocent ignorant reader that those things though of little consequence to Hinduism form the very basis of this great ancient religion.

Clever piece of journalism. Isn’t it ?

CHAPTER NINE

For Soap, Cocoa and Cigarettes

Nichols says : “ Little by little Christianity creeps into the Statute Book ” and “ little by little, Hinduism *creeps out* of the Statute Book. ”

This is one of the characteristic statements of the author, general in origin, sweeping in conclusion, vague in conception and unintelligible in meaning. So far as quoting the instances of this process of infiltration is concerned, he conveniently, withdraws and leaves it to the reader to clothe them with substance from his own memory. But he has the instance of the Sarda Act lurking in his mind, for he makes a passing reference to it.

Let the ignorant author know that child marriage has never been an integral part of Hinduism. Has this inhuman custom the sanction of any scripture ? Has this cruel practice the blessings of any of our saints ? Did any of our prophets marry a child ?

The truth of the matter is that a few centuries ago, Hindu parents were virtually forced to marry their daughters very young. When political power was wrested from the native rulers by the ravenous invaders from the North, a lewd wave of lasciviousness spread all over the land. While the big guns of the army of occupation filled their bags with gold and their caskets with jewels, the ordinary soldiers

hunted for young girls. Their innocent bodies were the most highly-prized trophy and the rape of their chaste persons the glory of their victory.

The tragedy of invasion became more ghastly and the effects of triumph more sinister when the victorious army instead of going back to their country decided to make India their new home. The native Hindus found that the rape of virgins was not just a passing curse, but was to be the permanent feature in the life of their womenfolk. So in order to ward off the covetous eyes of the villainous soldiers from their virgin daughters, parents were left with no other choice but to marry them young.

As conditions became more settled, the fear of abduction started diminishing. And, consequently, the practice of child marriage lost its popularity. But, unfortunately, in some orthodox quarters it had come to stay. And who can deny that in conservative families, the customs of the ancestors are religiously adhered to by their great-grand-children. Their fancies acquire the sanctity of a sermon and its superstitions are looked upon as having the backing of saints. Let us examine some of the ancient customs that are still practised in England. *And, mind you, not by the ignorant and the orthodox but by the rulers and administrators of law.*

When the King of England visits the Duchy of Cornwall with what things is he presented ? It is no good your guessing because you cannot. Here are the things, believe it or not. A grey cloak, a brace of greyhounds, a pair of gilt spurs, a pound of cummin,

a salmon spear, a pair of white gloves, a hundred shillings and a pound of pepper !

The Recorder of London as he enters the court of the Old Bailey to administer the law of the land carries with him a bunch of the newly-cut flowers. This custom had its origin in the fact that the criminal standing in the dock was so dirty that an offensive stench came from him and the fragrance of the flowers came to the rescue of the *delicate* nostrils of the judge. Today the criminal is as clean in his dress and body as the judge himself, and the court-room is air-conditioned, but still the flowers remain in the hand of the Recorder !

Nichols says that the Sarda Act is a "clear-cut example of Christianity conquering Hinduism." Till lately child marriage was common among the Hindus, Muslims and people of other religions. That the instances of early marriages were more common among the Hindus is beside the point. To be precise, one should say that the Sarda Act not only conquered Hinduism but Islam and *other* creeds as well.

The author accuses the Hindus—by the way they were only orthodox Hindus—for opposing the Bill. But he should know that a more fierce and relentless opposition came from the Muslims. Of course Nichols would jump up and swear : " It is a Hindu lie." So we open Page 223 of *Pakistan* and let Dr. Ambedkar speak :

“ It is noteworthy that the Muslims opposed the Child Marriage Bill on the

ground that it was opposed to the Muslim Common Law. Not only did they oppose the Bill at every stage but when it became law, they started a campaign of Civil Disobedience against the Act.”

However, there is one factor that cannot be denied. It is not the sublime spirit of Christianity that has crept into our Statute Book, but a legion of disreputable practices of Christians that have stealthily worked for a permanent place in the life of Young India. The taboos of our ancestors—thanks to Christians—are today the pastimes of most of us.

Let us take one instance. Though before the advent of British Rule in India, drinking was in vogue, it was never clothed with the respectability it is today. It is no longer a sin to be committed in secrecy. It is a virtue to be practised publicly. There are a host of other vices of Christians that have caught us in their fatal coil. The reader too well must be feeling the cruel knots in his own life.

The patronage of power brings into being a corresponding state of helplessness. Lying low under the debris of political serfdom we forget the heights of our own ideals. Looking for crumbs to relieve the pangs of hunger we adopt the ways of our rulers to win *their* favours.

If Christianity is clothed in a pair of trousers and if a necktie is a mascot of the Cross then most assuredly Christianity is not only creeping into our Statute Book, but has crept into our every day life and has overpowered us by its *strength of character*.

And as regards the ignorant natives, the effect of Christianity is this : when the copies of the *Bible* are placed into their hands they “*exchange them for soap, cocoa and cigarettes.*”

The reader will think that I have quoted an Arya Samajist. I am sorry to say that he is wrong. It is Nichols himself from *News of England*, Page 100 !

CHAPTER TEN

Idol Worship Explained

THE author has with much bitterness expatiated over the institution of Deva Dasis, who are girls dedicated to temple service. This institution is nowhere found in the Punjab, Bengal or even Bombay. But the author has gone all the way to Madras to dig it up in an "off the track temple" as he himself admits. There this custom may still be existing to some extent, because the purifying influence of the Hindus came with the *Vedas* from the north and drove such immoral customs of the aboriginies southwards to Goa and Trichinopoly.

Deva Dasis like Nuns in the convents were dedicated purely for spiritual service. From ancient Greece the parallel of vestal virgins to the Goddess Vesta is perhaps more appropriate. If the institution of Deva Dasis fell into disgrace, the weakness of human flesh is responsible for its shameless downfall.

Having seen from experience that the presence of young girls in temples creates an impure atmosphere in sacred places, this practice was given up a long time back. But Christians, who are a wide-awake people and progressive in outlook, still adhere to the institution of sending young girls to convents. It does not benefit anyone if the Western people shut their eyes like an ostrich to the kind of life that

a vast majority of nuns lead in the unapproachable seclusion of the Houses of God. Some of them may be as pure and chaste as lillies. But if we just enter an English book-shop and look around we see an array of books written by nuns themselves. In a moment of confession they describe in lewd details the shame of their religious life. In a moment of repentance they let their eloquent mind speak to ease the sharp bites of their pricking conscience. As their last act of service to humanity they passionately warned their sisters that the so-called profession of dedicating oneself to the service of God was no better and no worse than prostitution itself.

If we casually turn over the pages of *Daily Mirror's* old files we read lecherous scandals about nuns flashed in screaming head-lines. The newspapers cry halt to this system but the beastly lust of priests exerts all its "spiritualistic" influence to see its continuation.

II

The author ridicules our idols and jeers at the practice of idol-worship. Nowhere does he let his miscreant pen mention the central and inescapable fact that the Hindus believe in the ONE-NESS OF GOD and that He alone is omnipresent and omnipotent. In a very crafty and ingenious way he hypnotises an unwary reader into the belief that the scores of gods carved out of stone are so many "Gods" with the capital G. Now this is

a blatant misrepresentation of our faith ; a mischievous topsy turvydom of facts and an impish distortion of our beliefs.

Frankly speaking, I am an iconoclast for I am convinced that these images and figures have served their purpose. Their function was to make the existence of God more real and His varied attributes more understandable. The primitive man's intellect could not be convinced about the reality of God especially when his eyes could not see His presence nor his longing hands could touch His Person.

The ancient priests faced by this attitude of " show us your God " were forced to portray His attributes in the form of graven images.

The childlike curiosity of an ordinary man was satisfied when he saw God *appearing* in idols of stone or brass.

As man's mind developed and his receptive intellect gathered more and more knowledge, he started dispensing away with these idols. It is true that in orthodox circles the practice of idol-worship still lingers on, but Young India does not believe in it in the same way as a modern Christian does not believe in the *Biblical injunction that the earth is flat*.

In the light of grave issues raised by Nichols it is essential to understand the real significance and meaning of idol-worship as it is practiced today in certain conservative quarters.

The Hindus worship not the idol of stone or an imaginary figure of brass but they worship the Divinity that the image symbolises and that resides in every particle of the universe. To a supercilious eye it may be insignificant and before his arrogant mind it may be trivial but to a man of faith it is there in all its majesty.

He uses the idol or any other symbol merely as a point on which he focuses his wandering mind. Just as another may be using the tip of his nose, a point in the sky, a speck in the atmosphere, a spot on a wall or something airy floating before his mind's eyes. *The idol itself is not the ideal.* It merely serves an ordinary man, whose control over his mind is not effective and whose mastery over his senses is very slippery, as a useful medium to acquire that devotional concentration which is the condition precedent to a heartfelt prayer and genuine meditation.

Image-worship is symbolic worship. It is the worship of supernal realities through the symbols which are supposed to represent them best. It is the translation for the time being of the infinite in terms of the finite, of the spiritual in terms of the material, of the invisible in terms of the visible, of the timeless and spaceless and formless in terms of time, space, and form, of the whole in terms of the part, of the universal in terms of the individual.

Idols and temples serve their devotees in conjuring up a religious atmosphere and uniting all the people in their religious ways of worship. It also systematizes the exercises of faith. The crucial test

is the test of faith, of religious emotion and of religious habits. And further, the most important fact is not the medium of our communion with the Deity but the communion itself. The fact of cardinal importance is not the language or the medium of expression, but the fact, or the matter of expression.

It cannot be gainsaid that idol-worship is practised by the followers of every religion. Is not the Cross itself, which adorns the black garments of nuns and glitters on the opulent chests of priests, the self same thing that Nichols condemns? Does it not help them to appreciate the sufferings of their Lord? Does it not silently whisper into their ears the lofty ideals of their Master? Do they not read the *Sermon on the Mount* transcribed on the Cross itself?

To an illiterate man in an Indian village, who has never heard of Christ, the Cross may be just an unusual piece of metal, good only to be hung around his cow's neck to distinguish her from the rest. But all the same to the orthodox Christians, the Cross is Christianity itself.

Further, why do we find the idols of the Virgin Mary and the various saints in the Roman Catholic Churches, let alone the graven figures of Jesus himself? An impartial observer like Aldous Huxley finds no difference between the Hindu pantheon and a Christian church. In his book *Ends and Means* he writes :

“ A Christian Church in southern Spain, or Mexico, or Sicily is singularly like a Hindu

temple. The eye is delighted by the same gaudy colours, the same tripe-like decorations, the same gesticulating statues; the nose inhales the same intoxicating smells, the ear and, along with it, the understanding are lulled by the drone of the same incomprehensible incantations, roused by the same loud, impressive music."

And what does Bernard Shaw say about idol-worship among his Christian brothers? Here is a quotation culled from his book *Every Body's Political What is What* :

"European peasants not only worship saints and the Virgin as Gods, but will fight fanatically for the ugly little black doll who is the virgin of their own church against the black doll of the next village."

The Muslims are supposed to be the breakers of idols. Ghaznavi's foremost task in India when his army overran our country was to smash the golden idols at Somnath Temple.

But may I ask what is the function of the sacred black stone which the Muslims visit at Mecca. (Sangi-Aswad)? True, they do not bow to the stone. Do they not with all the reverence that they can command and the love that they can express, kiss the stone? Is it not idol-worship though the form is different? Again, what is the hidden virtue behind the sanctity attached to the direction in which the sun sets? Perhaps their Mecca is that side. And what about the rosary? Does not the counting of its

beads like an automaton help a Muslim to concentrate his thoughts ?

The undeniable truth is that every religion has its sacred and ancient symbols, only the degree of worship varies and the form of belief differs.

But look at your Ganesh, the symbol of your religion. He sits in his cave, twists his trunk and rides in a chariot driven by a mouse, so says Nichols.

Here is the idea lying behind the construction of this odd looking image. Om is regarded by the Hindus to be the highest name of the Divine. It has been called the mystic word of the Hindus, the word of Power. To concentrate on it, it is said to take the mind nearest to the Highest. In the Hindi script it is written as—ॐ

The sculptor who carved out the figure of Ganesh, in his poetic imagination harmonised it with the construction of this word. The nose is lengthened to correspond with the drawing of this word though outwardly it looks like an elephant's trunk. The profile of this " half human and half-elephant " face is an imitation of—ॐ

As regards the mouse-ridden chariot, the idea conveyed to the human mind is that God is omnipresent. As the mouse can go everywhere in the house so the chariot which he drives has access to all places in and above the roofs, below and beneath the floors, within walls and everywhere.

But what about his limbs that in the fading light seem to twitch as though impelled by ancient lusts, is Nichols's taunting retort ?

Well, I let Huxley speak about the voluptuous figures that are found in Christian churches :

“ The ecstasies of the saints are represented by seventeenth century artists as being frankly sexual.”

Nichols observed that the limbs of Ganesh start sensuously twitching only when the darkness creeps into the room where Ganesh sits, but Huxley noticed his voluptuous saints in broad day light.

So Nichols, who is worse ? A sensuous saint during the day or a sensuous saint just for a few hours in the evening ?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Hysterical Nonsense

Before we proceed further let us see what Nichols *himself* says about the *Bible* and the saints who wrote it. On page 60-61 of his book, *The Fool Hath Said*, he writes :

“ To these men of faith we say : ‘ Whoever brought you up to regard every word of the *Bible* as sacred was extremely misguided. The *Bible* is the most varied book in the world. Some of its pages are dross, others are pure gold. To insist that every page has an equal value and that every page is authentic is to do harm to the whole great book.’

“ And having said this we would go on to point out that the ignorance of many devout Christians about their own *New Testament* is quite extraordinary. Let me ask them a few questions :

“ Do you know that all the most eminent critics agree that whoever wrote the gospel according to St. Matthew, it was not St. Matthew ? Do you know that St. Paul was the one person who most emphatically did *not* write the famous ‘ Epistle of Saint Paul to the Hebrews ?’ Do you know that it is generally agreed that the second epistle of Peter was probably written long after Peter was dead ?

“ Do you know that the beautiful story of Christ and the woman taken in adultery forms no

real part of the Gospel according to St. John? Do you know that it is absent from all the oldest MSS., and that it is even queried in many of the later ones, where it is admitted? Do you know that even the most devout and conservative critics are exceedingly disturbed as to the authenticity of the miracle (mentioned in Matthew only) of Peter casting a hook into the sea and bringing up a fish with a shekel in its mouth?

“Have you ever heard of Q? (From the German *Quelle*, a source). Are you aware that this is an hypothetical ‘lost Gospel’ which the scholars have been forced to assume in order to account for hundreds of striking similarities between Matthew and Luke, which are not in Mark?

“Are you aware that although the story of our Lord’s Virgin birth is a vital part of the Christian tradition, and although the gospel according to St. Mark is undoubtedly the oldest of the four gospels (much of Matthew and Luke being copied almost straight from Mark), yet the story of the birth is *not* in Mark at all? And, if you were aware of it, what is your answer to the very disquieting suggestions made by many eminent critics that the whole story is a pious fiction?

“Are you aware of the storms which have raged round the Gospel according to St. John? Are you aware that even Dean Inge, who, can hardly be described as prejudiced in favour of the rationalists, admits that instead of preserving for us the words, of Jesus Christ, it contains merely free composition by the writer himself? Have you ever

pondered the significance of the fact that whereas the first three gospels describe Christ's ministry as extending over one, or possibly, two years, and as being carried out in Galilee, John makes it extend over three years, and tells us that it took place in Jerusalem? Have you ever wondered why such a stupendous miracle as the raising of Lazarus, which St. John recounts, should not receive even a passing reference in any of the other gospels?"

Dear Nichols, if this is what you think of your sacred book and saints, how dare *you* applaud Christianity as you *do* in *Verdict on India*? Anyway, let us leave this turncoat to the verdict of his own conscience and concentrate on the book under criticism.

After using all sorts of opprobrious language against Hinduism, Nichols presents the choicest bouquets to Christianity and hails Christ as the only saviour of mankind and introduces him to the "misguided" Hindus as their best friend.

Look at this presumptuous statement. The concluding part gives vent to his foolhardy sentiments:

"The most important thing that ever happened to the world was the birth of Christ and that Christianity is not only true but wholly modern. It is the only standard that we accept and if it makes other standards look shoddy, we cannot help it."

Undoubtedly to the people of the West who were disgracing humanity by leading a primeval

life of savages, the birth of Christ was the noblest act of grace. Surrounded by the deepest darkness of ignorance, Christ was looked upon as the harbinger of the glorious Dawn of a New Age.

But, before the birth of Christ, was the whole of the world like a thick jungle infested with nefarious beasts though outwardly human in form? No. In the West alone were such beasts to whom the law of morality was the first victim of prey; to whom decency was but a manifestation of cowardice; to whom the doctrine of altruism was an enigmatical problem beyond the range of their circumscribed intellect.

Looking towards the East in pre-Christ days, we find that civilisation had reached the snowy peaks of love, service and toleration, while the Westerners grovelled in the dungeon of hatred, manslaughter and infidelity. According to the late Marquis of Curzon who was not overfond of India, when Nichols's forbearers "were running painted in the woods, the Hindus had developed a civilisation of their own."

To the West, in these cruel circumstances the birth of Christ was an unbelievable act of mercy and charity. To the East, his teachings were nothing else but a re-statement of the fundamental truths already enunciated by its own prophets.

It is buffoonish on the part of Nichols to say that other standards look shoddy. His eyes are so jaundiced that he can see nothing in its true perspective. Further, has he made a serious study of different religions? Only a qualified person

can judge the merits and demerits of a subject under investigation.

Imagine an illiterate discussing the works of Shakespeare !

Imagine a blind man giving his opinion about the intrinsic worth of Koh-i-Noor !!

Imagine a barber performing brain operation of addle-headed Nichols !!!

Nichols is most welcome to fan the spark that glows in Christianity into a tall flame. We have the eyes to see and the will to profit by that light. If we have been groping in the confusing alley of obscurity the distant radiance will illumine the straight path of salvation that we always missed seeing and refused to tread on.

But a man like Nichols does nothing of the kind. By his dynamite of spiritual arrogance he creates fissures between the East and the West. Religious and social prejudices poison the air between the orient and the occident. The habit common to the average Englishman of regarding a man of the race of Buddha or Confucius or a follower of Krishna, however cultivated he may be, as unworthy of a white man although the latter may be a booby, has done more harm than all the economic methods with which England has placed its foot upon the neck of oriental peoples.

The real problem of the world is whether the best minds of the two worlds will co-operate with one another or not. Whatever makes for unification, for sympathy, for expansion, for enlightenment, for

toleration, for freedom is to be encouraged and all that makes against these, that is in fact separative, narrowing, productive of hatred and strife, curtails liberty, encourages superstition and credulity, is to be discouraged.

For the building of this "brave new world," the East and the West should complement and supplement each other's functions. It is for the West to give us the finest machinery, the ideal systems, the perfect technical organisations, the right mental psychosis, to subordinate the giants of matter and force, heat and electricity, to the service of the finest, highest altruistic ideas of the soul. The central thought, the basic conception, the fundamental motive and impulse must come from the East, the superstructure, the elaboration of details, the perfection of the outer fabric of all sciences, all institutions must be borrowed from the West.

We, on whom rests the future of the world, want both self-assertion and self-renunciation, a capacity for war and yet a disposition to peace, a mastery of machinery and yet an imaginative vision.

II

With pride and elation Nichols smilingly tells us: "Christ taught us that all men are equal; the abolition of the slave trade was at least an attempt to realize this ideal."

We who are groaning under the iron heel of British Imperialism (which according to Nichols striv-

es for equality!) are most qualified to tear off this curtain of untruth and expose in all its details the hypocrisy of such loud professions. And listen to what Nichols says about Empires in *News of England* : “ *If Empires had to be, the British were certainly as well-fitted as any other people to possess one. The men who had been nurtured in liberty at home were able, without offence to their self-respect, to pass on at least a modicum of that liberty to their subject peoples.*” Shall we add *vide* Jallianwalla Bagh, Dandi March, the fast unto death of Jatinderanath, the Red Forts, August 1942, as instances of the *great* work done by the British Government.

Though slavery in its crude form has been abolished, yet it is firmly entrenched among the coloured races in more subtle and wily ways. Look at the map of the world. A greater portion of the earth is the slave of the whites. People fondly thought and wishfully believed that after the cease fire order by the Allies, countries under subjection would be set free. But the castles of freedom that we had built in the air (for John Bull does not permit such nonsense on land) were smashed by the Allied Victory.

Today the British Empire (euphimistically called the British Commonwealth of Nations), stands with added territories. The war for freedom and equality—because Christ taught that all men are equal—has resulted in snatching away freedom from many more millions. The slaves of the Axis Powers are the slaves of Allies.

If the Christians of Britain really believed that all men are equal, *this* unholy Empire of Britain would never have seen the light of day.

As the Wheels of Time move on, the gulf between Christianity and Christians widens. Christ stands in despair at the hill-top. Helplessly, He watches His followers heading for the valley of perdition, exquisitely decorated by Satan.

Admittedly, the "fortress at Geneva" was gigantic in structure, fascinating in detail and idealistic in conception. But at the bottom of it we find the foundation of greed, exploitation and connivance trying to support this *cidatel* of peace. When Mussolini unleashed his hounds on the innocent lamb of Abbysinia, the high priests at Geneva just muttered some incantations to ward off the threatened danger. The blood-thirsty Bull Dog from Downing Street just snarled and retired to eat his sumptuous meal cooked by his servants in the British Empire. It had enough to eat and to spare for a rainy day. So why should *he* pick a bone with the Fascist Hound? Inscrutable logic!

Nichols tells us that the fortress at Geneva just "crumbled and fell. But even its ruins are glorious." He keeps quiet as to who was responsible for its destruction. In *News of England* on page 17 he candidly admits that "with our *own* hands we broke up the League of Nations."

At every stage we find Nichols contradicting himself.

Further, is it not a fact that the so-called architects of a peaceful world were supplying arms and ammunition to those who were destroying whatever peace existed? But those destroyers were paying higher prices than those offered by the peace-builders. Nichols himself admits it on page 16 of *News of England* : “ We created Hitler. We made the advent of Hitler not only inevitable but *a part of the common justice of things*.” on Page 23 he again stresses this point : “ It cannot be too often repeated that Hitler is a direct product of the policies of Downing Street and the Quai-d’Orsay.”

And what could the *needy* capitalists, who had to earn money for the evening meal, do in such circumstances ?

It is interesting to note the following remarks of Nichols about the armament manufacturers of his own country as given in his book, *Cry Havoc* ! page 35 :

“ *More death, more dividends !* More blood—more bonuses ! Each shell that screams across the sky . . . no matter over what forsaken country that sad sky may lower . . . is bringing money into the pockets of the Armisville shareholders.”

The reader’s flesh will start creeping when he reads the following quotation from an article which appeared in *Daily Herald*, March 31, 1933 :

“ I (the great Socialist deputy Barther) affirm that either through the international solidarity of the great metallurgical industry

or in order to safeguard private interests, an order was given to *our* military chiefs not to bombard the Briey Valley (in Germany) factories which were operated by the enemy during the War."

And it was from this region that guns were manufactured to kill British and French soldiers. The "iron-masters" of Germany later on admitted that "Germany would have capitulated in 1915 if Briey had been bombarded."

CHAPTER TWELVE

Christ in Despair

THE ideals set forth by Christ are some of the sublimest. His contribution to the development of human thought has been constructive in origin and farreaching in consequence. His teachings are respected by the non-Christian world as among the noblest that were ever placed before mankind.

But let us examine dispassionately the sincerity with which the followers of Christ have translated these in their own lives.

Christ is exalted and worshiped in churches (and that too is a falacy in practice), but he finds no niche in the House of Commons, nor any place in the oligarchies that control the affairs of nations. When Satan tempted Jesus, he offered him dominion over all the kingdoms of earth. "The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him : 'All this power I will give thee and the glory of them for that is delivered unto me ; and to whomsoever I will give it. If thou wilt fall down and worship me all shall be thine.' And Jesus answered and said unto him : 'Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt serve the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'"

The lure and temptation that Christ overcame without the slightest hesitation has proved irresistible to Christian rulers, who prattle "ad nauseum" that Christ is their guiding star and that in conformity with His injunctions they wield the sceptre of power.

The worship and service of God are not rewarded by kingdoms. To those who believed in him and followed him, Christ promised a place in the Kingdom of Heaven but never spoke a word about the Kingdom on earth. It is only those who fall down low and lie prostrate in worship at the feet of Satan who can obtain the kingdoms of the world for he has promised these rewards to his worshipers. War is the weapon, slaughter is the price and the seizure of territory is the prize. Compared to the human toll taken in modern wars the human sacrifice offered to the Phoenician god Moloch was moderation itself.

Christian civilization is based on the readiness for war; the "higher and purer" the state of civilization the more complete and thorough the equipment for war. Even in the temporary respite of peace one hears the thunder of the engines of war, the grim preparations for the slaughter of men. The atmosphere reeks with the fumes of projectiles and bursting shells; the earth trembles under the impact of heavy machinery and the air quivers owing to repeated explosions. The drone of bombing planes shatter human nerves; the rattle of machine guns sends people into hysterics.

The two great wars have sucked the life-blood of the nations like a vampire. The First World War was supposed to be the end of all wars but another World War more deadly and truly global rose out the bowels of hell. Pyrehus, King of Epirus, knew what he was saying when he declared after the victory of Asculum, "Another such victory and we are dead."

All this in the name of Christ. Church dignatories bless regimental colours. The *Bible* is quoted in the war posters. And for what? To worship Satan and to aggrandise their kingdoms on earth.

As regards the bishops whose duty is to spread the message of the Prince of Peace, Nichols in his book, *Cry Havoc!* writes on page 49 :

"More than one bishop supplements the income he obtains from serving the Prince of Peace by also investing in the business of the God of War."

Again Nichols in his book, *The Fool Hath Said*, on page 240 observes : "Christ said : 'Do good to them that hate you.'" The Bishop of London says : 'Kill those who have shown kindness to our wounded.'

"Is the Bishop obeying his Master ?

"Is He ?"

On the same page, Nichols tells us the following interpretation of the Prince of Peace by his Bishops who in reality have proved "lords" of the War Lords.

“Bishop of Durham says : ‘Not without reason has the Christian Church ever loved to represent our Lord’s service in military figures of speech. *Without shedding of blood there is no remission.*”

The following gem is from Rev. Roberd F. Horton :

“God could stop the war but in *mercy* abstains from doing so !”

Another Bishop whose name Nichols does not mention, as he is dead, says. “God is calling us to hate”

II

According to Nichols : “Christ is at the end of every road that leads uphill, towards the light.” But on whatever road the Christians find Christ standing they turn and start walking downhill where they see Satan sitting surrounded with all the luxuriant temptations with which he seduces them. *The road being downhill the descent is easy.*

It is only in India that the teachings of Christ are understood and the central theme of his gospel *truly* followed.

It was a singular vision that came to St. John the Divine in the *Book of Revelation* :

“I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands . . . And one of the elders answered, saying unto

me, 'What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ?' And I said unto him : ' Sir, thou knowest.' And he said to me, ' These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'

For centuries this passage has been read through out "Christiandom" but it has conveyed no meaning to the Christian nations. Is it not being fulfilled in the letter and spirit by a nation which is not Christian in its profession of faith and dogma, but which is led by a man admitted to be more Christian than the Christians.

Rev. Dr. John Haynes Homes, an eminent minister of the Church, once addressed his congregation from the pulpit, with a Gandhi cap on his head in these solemn words :

" Why talk ye about God and the son of God and His resurrection on this earth when He *is* here."

The remote dream had become a plain palpable reality. The ideals of Crist were being practised by a non-Christian. May we ask where Christ would decide to live if he were to return to the modern world ? In London, Washington, Berlin, Moscow or Wardha ?

I am sure Nichols had Gandhi in his mind when, he let the following noble and sublime sentiments flow from his pen in his book, *The Fool Hath Said*, page 255 :

“ Which would Christ regard as the reality, the frontiers of the whole of France or the soul of a single Frenchman ? Which would Christ worry about—the freedom of the seas or the freedom of the soul ? To *whom* would Christ say : Well done, thou good and faithful servant—the men who wrote the various Hymns of Hate (and there were plenty of them in every language) or the men who suffered imprisonment as conscientious objectors ? ”

III

Among the divine Commandments that came from the mouth of Christ was : “ Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house.”

The followers of Christ were expected to obey this injunction, with all the devoutness of a disciple. But the history of Europe ever since it became a Christian continent has been one long sad story of its continuous breach. The life that they have lived and are living has been a travesty of this noble behest.

While the crusaders vainly tried, time after time, to wrest the Holy Land from the possession of the Saracen, the Christian nations of Europe were constantly at war against each other and were fiercely coveting the houses of their neighbours. The centuries that have rolled by, have not helped the promotion of Christian forbearance and Christian neighbourliness. On the contrary, they have progressively increased the base passion for covetous-

ness. To-day the ambition and greed is not confined to the houses of their immediate neighbours but the eyes which possess the vision of a vulture see the houses of distant neighbours. And the hands which possess the cruel strength of a tiger pounce upon them.

With the breach of this commandment followed the breach of another : "Thou shalt not kill." It was its natural corollary. Did not the Aramageddon of the Apocalypse stalk the whole of the globe as a living scourge during the last six years of war? Without any fear of being contradicted, one can safely generalize and say that goodness which is undaunted in its chivalrous adventure, and love of Truth, variedly active and wide-spread in its ministration, one rarely sees in the people of the West.

In the words of Nichols (*The Fool Hath Said* page 255) : "Can you see Christ with a national flag (the Union Jack) on his shoulder, with a bayonet in his hands? Can you see the fingers which heeled the sick unscrewing a cylinder of poison?"

Bespattering the whole world with their diplomatic lies, continually adding to the number of victims for their man-eating propensity, scientifically crushing the human rights of large continents spreading a contagion of ugly carbuncles all over the earth with the impurity of their utilitarian touch, keeping their snarling nastiness bared at the entrance of their miserly national mansion, the Christians have, in all these, an ever increasing gravitational pull against the top of their "greatness."

And let the Christians remember and take the head betimes—*The fall will be terrific.*

IV

Christ enjoined on his followers : “ Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”

Can the Christians say with honesty in their hearts that they practise even a semblance of this commandment in their lives ? The standards that govern their lives are a negation of this time-honoured ideal. The values that mould their philosophy of life are a mockery of this supreme duty. Let alone loving your enemies, the ruling Christians subjugate millions of men who wish them no ill. They harry from pillar to post those that did them no harm. They lash those that dare protest and shoot those that dare raise their heads in defiance.

We in India have seen the working of this doctrine. And it is Indians alone in the world who have followed this dictum of Christ in its entirety. The theory and practice of *Satyagraha* is based on *this* commandment. Multitudes of Indians have prayed for those who broke their heads with the iron knobs of *lathis*. They suffered the terrible rigours of jail life, but never an ill-thought against their persecutors escaped from their lips, and not a frown appeared on their foreheads. Their cheerfulness never flagged nor did their patience ever falter when from morn till dusk they were made to grind in the sweltering heat of summer.

Let Nichols read any article expounding the doctrine of *Satyagraha* by Gandhi and he shall have to admit that it is but a commentary on this commandment of Christ.

Gandhi, frail in body, bare except for a loin cloth, brown and emaciated like an anchorite of desert, challenges the might of the un-Christian world. Though maligned and persecuted, he reminds his "enemies" to remember what their Lord preached.

The Gandhi cap is a symbol of human devotion as sacred as the Cross. As the early Christians lifted the Cross in token of Christ's triumph over shame and death, so *are* Indians wearing this cap in token of Gandhi's triumph over tyranny and force.

The cap *will* go round the world as the Cross has gone round the world.

"People sneer at conscientious objectors because, as a rule, they know nothing about them. I will ask you if you can deny that these *are* indeed sons of Christ in whom He would have been pleased."

Dear reader, don't you think the above words are from an article by Gandhi in *Harijan*?

READER : Of course they are. I read something like that when Gandhi started his individual *Satyagraha* campaign as a protest against dragging India into Britain's War for the Consolidation of the Empire.

SELF : You are mistaken. It is Nichols speaking in his book, *The Fool Hath Said*, page 257.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Churlish Church

NICHOLS is second to none in his praises for the institution known by the name of the Church. But I am constrained to say that the Church as it has been functioning has done more harm than good to Christ, in particular, and the world in general. There are scores of glaring faults that cry themselves hoarse to attract the attention of the Christians. But I will just take three which have been shouting most into my ears. These three are so hideous that to describe them as three disgraces will not be doing them any injustice.

Before we proceed further it is interesting to learn what Nichols says about the institution of the Church in his own country. After dilating on the mentality of the priests and their "fat livings" with "incomes up to £ 2,000, a year," Nichols in *News of England*, page 111, says :

"It was a similar state of affairs in the secular world which led to the *Reform Bill* of 1832. In those days it was the "rotten borough" which had to be eliminated, and it was not till this was done that representative government was anything more than a farce. A hundred years have passed but the Church has still to follow the state's example,

has still to eliminate its 'rotten parishes,' if representative Christianity is to be even faintly worthy of its name."

The only reason for praise of the Church in *Verdict on India* and condemnation of it in *News of England* is that the Nichols of *Verdict on India* is different from the Nichols of *News of England*, just as the Christ of the Gospels is different from the Christ of history !

I call them disgraces because I believe these things to be deeper than errors ; they are radical departures from the norm of Jesus. (a) It is exclusive. (b) It is full of vested interests. (c) It is militant.

First, its most important branches are exclusive, that is, it recognises a non-membership. It ex-communicates. It acknowledges there are heretics, infidels, those who are not of its body and communion. Thus it has boundaries.

The Churches, as we find them to-day, are organisations. As far as their form is concerned, they are in the same category as political parties, lodges, clubs and orders. The common idea seems to be that Jesus organised a group, which he had called a Church. But he had not only had no such thing in mind, but such a thing is directly opposite to what was in his mind. The idea was a gospel of contagious friendship, but it fell into a world obsessed with the triumphant fallacy of the Roman Empire, and sold its soul for a mess of organisation—pottage. Christianity, to my mind at least, is unorganisable. When you organise it you

destroy its chief charm. You change a living spirit into a dead steam roller.

Nichols himself admits in his book, *The Fool Hath Said*, page 23, that “*The Church itself has sent away countless thousands of decent people from its doors.*”

What did Nichols say? Decent people . . . countless decent people . . . sent away from the Church . . . By whom? . . . By the Church itself!

SELF: Hurrah to the glory of the Church!

NICHOLS: Don't go off the track and start quoting me from my earlier books. You damned Hindu, concentrate on what I say in *Verdict on India*.

Put it in other words it means . . . children . . . the adjective decent is superfluous in this case . . . sent away from the house by the mother herself!

Such a mother is *no* mother but a despicable witch . . . and such a church is no church but . . . I must stop. I dare not offend the feelings of a Christian lady who is more than a sister to me.

The second disgrace is that the Church is full of vested interests. The error here is that ancient and common one of mistaking station in life for life itself. To belong to the Church gives one a certain social position, it is an asset towards getting on, towards acquiring a reputation, even towards getting *rich*. This immorality flows out of the preceding one, for to be exclusive means to be respectable. The Church cannot mend class feel-

ing which is the curse of the world. It stands mute and helpless before the swarming millions because it, in itself, is a class. If Jesus is in the Church at all to-day, He stands at the door, and, extending His hand towards the vast crowd in the street exclaims : " Behold my mother and my brethren."

No wonder, Nichols in, *The Fool Hath Said*, page 242, observes that " The churches apparently do not take their Christianity seriously."

The Church has always been greedy for money. Its excuse, of course is that it needs money with which to do good. But its error lies in assuming that mankind is, morally helped by the giving or spending of money. While the truth is that almost the entire ethical value connected with money lies in the making of it. Money-making touches the whole life of the people, their daily concerns, their every activity ; money-making is too frequently only an attempt to heel the injustice of our methods of money-getting. Forty billion pounds poured into the coffers of the Church tomorrow would *not* advance the cause of Christ one inch, any more than building a gold fence around a sapling would make it grow faster.

And as regards the finances gathered by the Church, Nichols himself in *News of England* tells us :

" The Church of England's finances are to say the least of it, odd. One might even say immensely odd, and oddly immense . . . the suspicion remains that the church's finances are, as we have said before odd. It seems to me,

for example, odd that thousands of under paid Durham miners pay toll to the church on every ton of coal sent to the surface. It seems even odder when one reflects that this coal, directly or indirectly, helps to warm the proletarian protuberances of the communist Dean. ”

Poor old Dean of Canterbury is the victim of Nichols’s vitriolic remarks, because in 1938 the Dean had said: “ The things I want my church to stand for lie behind what Soviet Russia has done. ” And in the words of Nichols, “ He has played a hundred variations on the theme that Russia is the most Christian country in Europe of today ! ”

Having lost his temper Nichols starts gibbering :

“ What does it mean ? Well . . . *What ?* ‘ Religion is the opium of the people.’ That stares you in the face, in gigantic letters, on hoardings all over Russia. The very idea of God, to the young Russian child is ludicrous and slightly indecent. Does the Dean of Canterbury wish that slogan : ‘ Religion is the opium of the people,’ to be hung outside the doors of Canterbury Cathedral ? And if not which of us is incapable of understanding the English language . . . the Dean or I ? ”

I for one leave it to the reader to give his opinion as to who understands the English language, the Dean or Nichols. And further who understands the true spirit of religion, the Dean or Nichols ?

Are the parasitic padris who always have a long cigar in their mouths—the twentieth century Cross—and with Dry Martinees daintily held in their hands—drinking the health of Christ—more Christian than the workers of Russia who have given a new message to the world? Are they? Come on Nichols, give me the answer.

The third disgrace is that it is militant. This needs to be defined. I mean that the Church aggressively proposes to do people good, to uplift them, to convert them. This is spiritual snobbery of the worst kind. When I essay to convert you, I imply that *I am better than you*! and that you need to be made like me. When I approach you to uplift you and improve your character, it implies that I am as a teacher, you are as a pupil; I am as a papa and you as a child.

This has always been a matter of amusement to us. Going back to the founder of Christianity we find none of this. Jesus held no monster revival meetings. And you cannot see the point to that, until you get the right notion of what religion is. It is nothing in its essence, but personal influence. RELIGION IS THE PERSONAL INFLUENCE OF GOD.

II

It will not be going off the track to say that the popularity of Church as is evident in its everyday life.

“ In London, in most of the big cities, the pulse of worship throbs ~~fastly~~. It throbs

principally among old ladies, who may be seen (God bless them) alighting timidly from their cars in the great squares, and vanishing through the porch, to sit in twos and threes while a weary vicar drones comforting words to them, and a full-throated and somewhat irresponsible choir sings anthems, and covers up the thin quavering of a few tired voices.

“ ‘ A few more years, and these tired, gentle old ladies will be dead, and then . . . who will remember Christ ? ’ That was what I used to think, before going to Oxford. I had visions of our churches in decay, closed, or turned to secular purposes. One saw the Church as the last refuge of a few dying eccentrics.”

These words are of Nichols . . . the defender of Church . . . Nichols who disdainfully compares the Hindu pantheon with his own House of God . . . Nichols who asks the Hindus to march into Church perhaps because the Christians themselves don't go and wants Hindus to fill in the yawning chairs.

If you disbelieve me, please open page 181 of *The Fool Hath Said*.

III

A few words about the character and work of Christian missions in India will not be out of place.

In India we are face to face with Missionary Imperialism, which is a compound of five kinds of

imperialism viz., religious, racial, cultural, political and economic. And, Jesus has been made into what may be called the Hitler of Christendom, a figure as different from the meek and crucified Jesus as could be. This is the great tragedy of Christian missions. And in it lies a real menace to the civilisations and cultures of oriental countries. On the so-called uniqueness of Christ has been built up an edifice, which is the very negation of the Christianity of Christ. Intelligent and honest missionaries are fully aware of these facts, and although they among themselves discuss these matters frankly and fully, they are afraid to do so before their home constituencies. They dare not face the fact of failure of their life-work and of the cause they have sponsored.

The so-called National Churches, especially in India, are, we find, neither national nor Churches. The Church here is a socio-economic community, the outlook of which is largely secular and materialistic. It is entirely parasitic to its Western pattern and, what is worse, is Pharisaic in its relation to the people of other faiths. This attitude has been generated in it by the constant dinning into its ears of the indictment of faiths other than the Christian. The moral results of all this Pharisaism have been disastrous.

I have known many missionaries here and I find that some of them born and bred for the job of a police detective are converted into missionaries. In the Mission School at Gujranwala where I had my primary education, I found that some men with all the possibilities of a successful pugilist in them

were appointed our *teachers*. In other callings such incongruities are not productive of so much evil as in the sacred profession of religion.

The Christian religion which is a *white lily*, changes its colour to *red*, in their hands. Under the pretence of spreading the gospel of love they breed not only a racial and sectarian contempt but also political antagonism. It has been brought vividly home to our mind that the missionaries are on one side and we are on the other.

They are ready to convert us to their faith but they are not prepared to treat us as one of themselves. The Christian missionaries of all persons on earth, ought to have undertaken the noble task of uniting nation with nation with a just respect for the rights and privileges of all. But the opposite has been true. It is the Christian missionaries, who more than any others, have created a gulf of difference between Christians and non-Christians. In India there exists a great national barrier of indomitable pride between the rulers and the ruled. The missionaries have added to the volume and strength of that pride by their religious and social segregation and consciousness of their political prestige.

The mind of a missionary in India is like that of a man who has a recognised wife and also a mistress to whom almost openly he pays court. Christianity is that wife, while politics is the mistress. A point is reached where the national interests of the missionaries collide with ours. At that difficult point

they cannot follow the precepts of the great and lowly Christ.

Nichols will not appreciate the *delicate* difference between fidelity and adultery because in his book *Cry Havoc!* page 215, he has laid the dictum: "If you say that it would be difficult for you to love . . . sixty women at once, my only answer is that you must try to do so."

I wonder why this libertine has not been prosecuted by the English police. Is not adultery and its advocacy a crime in England?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Excuses Par Excellence

WHEN England jumped into the arena of war, she took pains to convince the world that in the name of freedom she had accepted the challenge of Hitler; for the removal of injustice she would shed her blood and for the establishment of democracy she would make every sacrifice. It was pompously proclaimed that it was the chivalry to protect the weak nations that had prompted her to unsheath the sword and not the greed to consolidate her crumbling Empire.

For these sentiments, full of love and throbbing with humanitarianism, England secured a thumping ovation. But when the noise of applause abated and the excitement of enthusiasm died down, the objectivity of outlook once again gripped the analytical minds of critics. All over the subject countries the whispering campaign went around: "*But what about the nations already lying prostrate at your guilty feet? Why don't you give them freedom to prove your sincerity? Why don't you establish democracy to convince them of the bona-fides of your high sounding claims.*"

England naturally felt embarrassed by the mordacity of these caustic remarks. She had to wriggle out of the painful dilemma. To crush these scathing remarks she set the wheels of her Publicity Machine into motion.

In very sympathetic language the War Lords from the House of Commons declared : " We respect your sentiments and see the truth of your cause. But the problems created by this total war are so preponderant that such delicate questions and niceties of constitution making cannot be discussed in an atmosphere which reeks with the fumes of projectiles. Rest assured, when we have won the war, you *will* be free."

These are not the actual words but the essence of their long-winded speeches.

The war is over. India finds herself as neck-deep in the slush of slavery as she stood before.

Looking back we find that England had purposely started a vicious propaganda against India's inherent fitness to work a democratic constitution.

India had become the acid test of Britain's high-flaunting promises. World opinion was also veering round to India. Therein lies the second reason for flooding the world with propaganda that in the conditions in India are most antagonistic forces against the survival of democracy. The clever and seasoned diplomats of Downing Street were building up their case *to deny freedom to India after the war*. Hirelings like Nichols were bribed to damn India and to convince the world by the persuasive power of the pen, that to talk of democracy in India is like trying to see the sun at night !

Nichols does his job admirably well when he says :

“ Nothing could be more ludicrous than the spectacle of elderly British liberals gravely applying the principles of Western democracy to a country in which democracy has about as much hope of surviving as a clump of Scottish heather in the desert of Thar.”

This is a typical prandial gossip of Nichols. But Nichols believes in the efficacy of gossip with his whole soul as is clear from his assertion in, *Cry Havoc !* page 123 :

“ Gossip has a *real* importance to the world. It is the froth on the surface of the deep, swelling waves—the froth which shows which way the waves are driving. Men will follow that froth, even though they know *not* where it is leading them.”

So that is why Nichols wanted “ his American friends ” and Mr. and Mrs. Smith in England to follow the froth of gossip which was running on the surface of his deep, swelling waves of lies with which his book, *Verdict on India*, is full to the brim wondrous-full.

Having written all this, I wonder why did Nichols worry about the fitness of India for practising democracy. In his book, *Are They The Same At Home*, page 68, he spits at the very word democracy. If you disbelieve me here is the quotation :

“ I myself . . . can enthuse greatly over no political party, simply because the whole system of Government by popular representation seems to me *too* fantastic even to merit consideration. The idea of ruling a far

flung Empire according to the whim of an amiable charwoman (multiplied by a few millions) strikes me as far more astonishing than the most curious features of the Tibetan constitution. The only possible form of Government that I can conceive is that of benevolent despotism. And if there were no benevolent despots on the horizon, I should choose a malevolent one."

If we translate this gem of political philosophy in terms of personalities, we conclude that Nichols would prefer to be ruled by a Hitler because he is (was) a "malevolent dictator," and not by Attlee because he was elected by thousands of charwomen.

Then the author goes for Miss Pearl Buck who really understands the Asiatic peoples because of her intimate acquaintance with the Chinese. She feels for them because she knows them. She works for them because she sympathises with their aspirations. In the name of justice and morality she carries on a ceaseless campaign for India because she feels her cause *is* righteous.

But the author rudely snubs her: "Nothing could be more grotesque than the determination of American publicists, such as the bucolic Miss Pearl Buck, to talk about the Indian people, as though there was no difference between a Gond Aboriginal, a Bombay boxwallah, a Punjab Chaprasi, a Madrasi lawyer, a Travancore untouchable, a Sikh warrior, a Pathan money-lender, Mr. Gandhi and His Highness the Aga Khan."

Before I proceed further may I ask him if a Southampton dockyard worker, a top-hatted British Tommy in his Khaki uniform, a Scotch highlander in his multi-coloured kilt, a guardsman in busby, a house-maid, a Devonshire diaryman, a Piccadilly salesman, a London beauty revue star, a nurse, a strapping WAC, a sister of mercy and a curly headed and painted lips Journalist Nichols, are all alike in his country.

It is high time that Nichols learnt from the pages of History that before his country understood the rudimentary principles of democracy, India was practising it in all its minutest details. Our *Panchayat* system has been admitted by foreign travellers, who came to India, in the days of East India Company, to be the truest nucleus of democracy itself.

Every village (and India was 90% villages in those days though now it is only 70%) had an elected representative council, called the *Panchayat*. The franchise was not restricted, it was universal. There were no qualifications of literacy and property, it was just adult suffrage. The gulf of separate electorates did not divide the common life of the country. But the well-tempered link of joint electorates bound the members together. The whole of the village population was a well-built strong unit, with common aspirations and one ideal—mutual service.

Only trustworthy men of experience and possessing sterling character were chosen. There was no question of buying votes because the temptation of making money by the members did not exist.

This body of representative people worked for the welfare of the community; created conditions for their orderly life and looked after the sanitation of the village. Moreover all individual quarrels, family feuds and business disputes were referred to this council. In fact it was a court of justice as well. The verdict of this body was the final word and submission to its decision was the moral and social duty of the parties concerned. The sanction behind the non-compliance with its behest was social boycott and communal ostracism.

The necessity of applying this sanction never arose because the judgment was impartial; the faith in the integrity of representatives all comprehensive and the shame of being outcast too biting, to be bearable.

As the corrosive influence of the British began to creep into the four walls of Indian life, the institution of *Panchayats* started disintegrating. The remains of this democratic body, ethical in conception and idealistic in practice still lie scattered in the villages. From beneath the debris Democracy peers and curses Britain. Thinking of her glorious past she execrates her lowly present. Pining for its revival, she looks towards Gandhi for help. In Gandhi's village uplift programme, she reads the message of hope.

II

Now we come to the second part of the author's thesis that India is not fit for democracy, because the people (or peoples as Nichols would

prefer) are dissimilar in appearance, have conflicting views on customs and dress themselves in different costumes.

It must always be borne in mind when discussing India that she is a vast country whose inhabitants comprise one fifth of the world's population. In the very nature of things, there can *never* be uniformity of dress, similarity of features and oneness of culture.

And it is most cruel to use the existence of these differences as a bulwark against the Ganges of Democracy from fertilising our land rendered sterile by the stagnant and filth-ridden sewer of British Imperialism.

Look at Russia and its variegated cultures and multifareous customs. Their multi-coloured costumes are diametrically different in style and shape. But still the inhabitants are Russians first and Russians last.

Then, look at the different religions of the peoples. There are Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists who unmolested by the State, follow their ancient customs, who unhampered by any social restrictions live their own individual family life, who inspired by the common ideal of Russia First, work zealously to put her on the top of the world.

All these people are like the different flowers in the beautiful garden of Russia which has burst open into country-wide blossom.

The argument that the naked Gandhi is different from the well-dressed Aga Khan, hence democracy cannot be applied to India is as absurd as it is to say that a dying man should not be saved because he has no money to pay for the doctor's bill.

Dear Nichols, let me for *the sake of argument* grant you your thesis that India is unfit for democracy, and so the question of granting freedom to India does not arise. Now, if you promise that you will not lose your temper, may I ask you to refer to your human and just sentiments expressed by *you* in your book, *The Fool Hath Said*, page 257 :

“No man dare set words on the lips of Christ, even in imagination. But is it not certain that, in effect, he would ask us: ‘And why should you not give it away? Why do you expect me to share your overweening determination to cling to your earthly possessions? Have I ever said anything, at any time, in any place, which could lead you to imagine that? Did I not say: Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth? Did I not say: Whosoever will save his life shall lose it? Why then should you come to me and expect me to feel a patriotic indignation because England relaxes her hold on some parts of the earth, which God gave to all men?’ ”

Boiling down your two arguments we conclude that according to the Nichols of *Verdict on India*,

England cannot give freedom to India ; according to the Nichols of, *The Fool Hath Said*, England should not hold India in bondage.

Well done, Nichols, the true son of Christ at the age of 38 but Dr. Jackyl and Mr. Hyde at the of 45.

What next ! A monkey at 60 !

III

Now let us turn our gaze towards England which is quoted as *the* Home of Democracy and see for ourselves, how far the pretensions of these "freedom-loving people," stand the test of reality. At home they may be democratic, abroad they are totalitarian. At home they foster the spirit of freedom but in their colonies they crush it as if it were an epidemic of plague.

Democracy in England is a misnomer. It is a travesty of the sacred things that are associated with the word democracy. It has germs in it of the true type, it must be admitted. But democracy which denies democracy to other countries is diluted Fascism. The cloak though silken, pleasant to see and soft to touch, is used to hide the totalitarian tendencies of Imperialism. And Imperialism is as much a negation of democracy as the worship of Satan is that of Christianity. Perhaps, the Britishers will not appreciate this simile because all these four things—Imperialism, Democracy, Satan worship and Christianity are synonyms to them.

Mr. Drew Pearson, the well-known American columnist in an article dated Dec 12, 1945, writing on the cut throat British Imperialism throughout the world said :

“ The Netherlands East Indies is only one example. Greece is another. One of the worst examples is Ethopia, where British troops still occupy a part of a nation which fought to death against having Italian troops on the soil. The latest case is that of Siam, with seven hundred years of proud independence over which the British now demand a protectorate.”

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Quit India Explained

NICHOLS has probed into every part of Indian life. His power of "observation" is meritorious. His patience in analysing the smallest details deserves sympathy, though his mischievous habit of interpreting them in a crooked way evokes condemnation.

The Hindus' conception of God, down to their habit of wearing garlands (for a few minutes at marriage parties) form the subjects of his searching enquiry. But when he is confronted with the delicate and all important task of discussing the August Resolution of the A. I. C. C., he just lightly says : " We will skip the whys and the wherefors of the mass Congress arrests." And when he is asked to thrash thread-bare the momentous issues involved in the QUIT INDIA RESOLUTION, he just dismisses the question by saying : " They will be the subject of endless debate," and takes shelter behind the conjured-up dream that " When History gives its final verdict it will record an emphatic vote in favour of the British Empire." So far the verdict of History is given in three Chapters : The Simla Conference convened by the Viceroy, the mandate of the masses by sending Congressmen to the Legislatures and the release of Aruna Asaf Ali.

The guilty conscience of the author seems to weigh so heavily on his mind that he is afraid of

being unconsciously forced to write a word or two which might betray a sneaking appreciation of the Congress standpoint. Like Gobbels he refuses to lend his ear to the argument of Schushnigg and Col. Becks but lets his violent tongue jabber words that fly on all sides. Just listen to the concluding portion of his harangue :

“ If it had not been for these arrests the whole of India would have been plunged into bloody chaos within a week ; the Japanese would have swept through the gates carrying fire and slaughter and the war would have been definitely prolonged .”

Mrs. Naidu seems to have knocked out these wicked notions from his apostate mind. This is clear from his admission : “ *As far as she herself is concerned, she may be quite right .*” But at the same time he refuses to discuss these things and says : “ We will not go into all that. It is more interesting to consider her merely as a cultured, charming woman, swept into goal as the result of her conviction .”

The author did *not* go all the way to Madras to meet Mrs. Naidu because her charm captivated him or her culture tickled his imagination.

The one and only reason is that he met her because she was the only Congress Working Committee member not confined within the four walls of jail.

Honest journalism demands that he should have given publicity to her views on the political situation.

Fair-play requires that he should have sought clarification on all the points. But in reproducing his interview he merely concentrates on the dramatic details of the arrests of Congress leaders. These details however interesting are of little consequence to a serious student of politics though to the novelist Nichols they may form a good story.

Look at the serious way in which he discusses Pakistan with Jinnah. The whole of this interview was essentially "political." There he does nothing to distract his reader's attention. No anecdotes are related. No ludicrous description of the household is given. The number of sloppy sandwiches he ate is not counted. In his interview with Mrs. Naidu he affectedly tries to be humorous, while in relating his talk with the *Emperor of Pakistan*, he is at pains to focus the thoughts of his reader on the centre of One Nation whose circumference is PAKISTAN. And in this imaginary circle the personality of "the most important man in Asia" is *made* to dominate.

In *News of England*, Nichols in the same way tried to polish the halo of the Fascist Mosley in the year 1938. But when the war started the British public demanded that Mosley the "most important man" of Nichols should be lodged in Old Bailey.

The Hero of Nichols was adjudged a traitor. Let us see what happens to "the most important man in Asia."

II

The omission of the discussion of the "whys and wherefors" of the August Resolution on the part

of Nichols is scandalous. It is essential to the understanding of the circumstances which forced the Congress to symbolise its demands in QUIT INDIA, especially so, because Nichols in the latter chapters accuses it as a cent per cent Fascist organisation.

Here is the background of the August Resolution. These are not just hearsay but facts of History. These are not just the gossip of a traveller but the headlines of newspapers. They are not just figments of the imagination but quotations from the documented speeches of Indian leaders.

After the breakdown of the Cripps Negotiations, the political situation in India began to deteriorate as rapidly as does the condition of a diabetic patient caught in a coma of profound insensibility. The food situation in the country was reminiscent of nineteenth century famine conditions. But Linlithgow lolled on his throne and maintained his sphynx-like silence: Amery meanwhile moved up and down in the House of Commons and hood-winked the world with his evasive loquacity. His epilogue cum prologue to the debates on India was : *"All is well in the land under my charge."* Bureaucracy in India afraid to be trampled over by the heavy foot of public opinion buried its head in files and refused to face the blows of agitation.

Neither logic nor reason, neither peril nor disaster could shake it out of its supine indolence. Like Rip Van Winkle it slept, and like a well-fed pig it snored.

Looking beyond the frontiers of India, we find that the Allied military position was as grave as that of a house whose creaky walls had begun to crumble. Sebastapool had fallen and the Nazi hordes incensed by the glory of their splashing victories were goose stepping with supreme confidence towards Stalingrad. From Moscow emerged the harrowing cry : " Open a Second Front."

The yellow dragon after devouring the Pacific Islands turned its rapacious head towards the heart of China. The emaciated body groaned and begged for more effective aid to sustain her.

The garrison of Tobruk had fallen and Rommel was virtually the master of the desert.

Singapore surrendered in a most ignominious manner. Amid the blazing fires at the great naval base, there disappeared into smoke the once impressive legend of British supermacy. From there the Japanese hop-stepped into Burma. They overran it with the same irresistible swiftness.

But the lesson of this hair-raising tragedy was treated with annoying indifference. The Imperial psycho-analysts refused to diagnose the working of the mind of a slave. This warning that latent and suppressed hatred may burst out and express itself in the tangible form of a positive leaning towards the enemy was brushed aside with supreme contempt.

Obviously India was to be the next victim. From pubs to Parliament it was gossiped that

disgruntled India in moments of uncontrollable frustration might go over to the enemy camp.

Wardha was distressed by these Allied setbacks and the peculiar conditions that prevailed in India perturbed it. From the hut of Gandhiji echoed and re-echoed the gentle admonition that *a National Government should be forthwith formed to prosecute the war effort on a national basis*. The lurking danger of India misbehaving when the Japanese invaded her had already started manifesting itself in grisly nakedness. The deep-rooted ill-will against the British could only be transformed into active goodwill by accredited representatives of the people who understood their psychology and appreciated their point of view.

Ultimately this demand for the formation of a National Government was summarised into the slogan—Quit India. The mischievous bureaucracy of its own free will interpreted this slogan as meaning : “ You Britishers get out of India bag and baggage.” But Nehru at once snubbed the British publicists by clarifying this slogan. “ It was *never* intended that the English as individuals should pack up and go ” Nehru declared.

Needless to say, the British Government spurned the hand which offered help and kicked the whole Congress into jail. The nation lost its temper and the authorities ran amuck. People committed acts of violence and the Government let the black rain of bullets fall on their heads. It is unnecessary to go into the horrifying details of this diabolical reign of terror.

Nichols says : " If it had not been for these arrests the whole of India would have been plunged into bloody chaos within a week." Well, judging retrospectively, an impartial historian would say without any demur that *because* of these arrests India *was* thrown into a bloody chaos.

As regards the second assertion of Nichols that the Japanese would have swept over India, it is a fantastic statement. The Congress leaders had made it abundantly clear that even if the Government did not condescend to co-operate with them they would fight the Japanese to the bitter end with their *last* drop of blood.

The anti-Japanese sentiments of the Congress leaders were so deep, sincere and effective that *the Bombay National War Front started using the slogans of Nehru in their war posters.*

But Nichols true to his mischievous nature refuses to mention a word about *this fact of history*. For him the thesis that the Congress declined to co-operate with the British, hence the Congress was pro-Fascist is quite enough and self-explanatory in character.

Shall we say that Russia during the days of the Non-aggression Pact with Germany was a pro-Fascist State? Though I have drawn on this analogy the position of the Congress was one better than Russia's, because the Congress had openly declared its hostility towards the Fascist States and wanted to contribute its might to crush this monster whose gaping jaws wanted to swallow humanity, while Russia in those days remained neutral was friendly towards Germany.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

A Lesson in Sadism

THE author's detestation of Gandhi is so implacable that even the half-dead Gandhi, writhing in the pangs of biting hunger, does not evoke his sympathy. Throughout the book, Nichols carries into practice his grim resolve to riddle the personality of Gandhi with the fusillade of his trenchant criticism.

I feel it is futile to criticise Nichols and condemn the grave injustice that he does to Gandhi because in his book, *News of England*, page 208, he has frankly admonished the glib world: "Fair play is an expression which in *these* islands is obsolete."

Don't think that Nichols was referring to the Japanese Islands. He meant Great Britain. Japanese "fair play" had the full support of Nichols as he had advised the Australian Government to present a slice of the country to Japan.

In discussing the fast which Gandhi undertook at the Aga Khan Palace the author observes:

"No doubt the fast was indefensible. It was barefaced political blackmail and whatever its outcome, it could have no effect on the general situation except to confuse the issues."

He passes his verdict without discussing as usual the whys and wherefors of the fast. His treat-

ment of serious subjects is nothing but frivolous persiflage ; his analysis of momentous issues desultory and his enquiry into the causes which precipitated the crisis scrappy.

Gandhi was not off his head when he decided to crucify his flesh. Something must be happening in India which was scorching his soul in agony. As the intensity of the heat of the rising flame became higher, the corresponding pain of his soul grew deeper and deeper. At last, the breaking point arrived, when he could suffer no longer. He wanted relief. The only way to seek succour for his anguished soul was to starve his body.

Refreshing our memory about the circumstances which goaded Gandhi to fast, we find that a chain of letters passed between Linlithgow and Gandhi. The *Mahatma* as is his wont meekly pleaded with the Viceroy that the wholesale arrests of Congress leaders were morally untenable, and politically inexpedient. The Viceroy should have waited for the letter which Gandhi had declared he would send at the A. I. C. C. Meeting. This was to be the starting point of negotiations and finally end in an honourable settlement. But the Government smashed the hopes and wishes of the Congress leaders. It dramatically precipitated the crisis. The consequent repression and the leonine thirst for blood made the Mosaic Law of "tooth for a tooth" look like an act of forgiveness and mercy.

As soon as Gandhi was supplied with newspapers, he learnt that India had been plunged into

a bloody carnage. Immediately he condemned it categorically in his letter to the Viceroy, and dissociated himself from every act of violence. He made it clear that he never sanctioned the use of violence.

Gandhi knocked and knocked at the Viceregal gates and pleaded his innocence. But the Viceroy remained as unmoved as a rock. And his heart was as lifeless as a stone. He was *prima facie* convinced that the Congress under the authorised leadership of Gandhi was solely responsible for the bloody inferno that India had become.

The Viceroy wanted Gandhi to disassociate himself from the August Resolution. But Gandhi pleaded that he should be convinced of his error, if the Viceroy wanted him to act singly, and he said, "I shall make ample amends." And further he should be placed among the members of the Working Committee, if the Viceroy were sincere in his demand for a positive suggestion coming from the Congress.

Needless to say, this request was brushed aside with the same sneer as an appeal for promotion by a subordinate, guilty of corruption and embezzlement.

In his letter dated Jan. 29, 1943, Gandhi let his tormented mind express itself:

"If then I cannot get soothing balm for my pain, I must resort to the law prescribed for *Satyagrahis*, namely, a fast according to capacity."

Replying to the Government's distortion of the motive behind the fast he wrote :

“Despite your description of it ‘as a form of political blackmail,’ it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the Highest Tribunal for Justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal, I shall go to the Judgment Seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge between you as the representative of an all powerful Government and me as a humble man who has tried to serve his country and humanity through it.”

These are the circumstances which forced Gandhi to gamble with his life to assuage his mental pain. Through physical torture he tried to pacify the anguish of his soul.

“Barefaced black-mail ” is the convenient slogan of an escapist to malign a spiritual process for the vindication of one's innocence. This catchphrase is an ingenious ruse to confuse the reality of issues.

An earnest supplication for “a soothing balm” to alleviate the soul wincing with pain, the author vulgarises as “political maschoism.” We on our part would characterise this inhuman attitude of the Government as another proof of its age-long “political sadism.”

To the utter disappointment of men like Nichols, Gandhi emerged unscathed through this baptism of fire. Gandhi knew that his cause was

right and he had the completest faith in the justice of God. But Nichols ironically sneers at the very word faith as is clear from his buffoonish definition of the word as given on page 192 of *Are They The Same At Home* :, “ *Faith is a musty, lisping word to mee. It is no more a virtue than measles* ”

I have scratched and scratched my head to find the sense between the parallel of faith and measles but my efforts have resulted in aching fingers and a few hair have fallen on my table.

As I don't want to go bald, simply for the sake of understanding the subtle meaning of Nichols, I desist from pursuing the subject further.

Perhaps when I get measles, I shall be in a position to get to the point of Nichols.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Mrs. Naidu "Ignores" Nichols

AT Bombay during the A.I.C.C. Session I had a little chat with Mrs. Naidu. For this, "meeting" I must thank my friend O. P. Khosla. Mrs. Naidu was so elusive at Bombay that all my attempts to contact her at the house of her host, Madame Sophia Wadia, failed. On the last day of the Session I told Khosla of my difficulty. He solved my problem at once by suggesting that I should see her in the tea-tent which was especially erected adjacent to the main vast Pandal. "But only Working Committee and A. I. C. C. Members are allowed to have tea during the tea interval. Yesterday I tried to work my way like a thief, but was questioned and stopped by a smart lady volunteer," I replied.

"Oh, you don't know the right way of dealing with girls. Come with me to-day. Yesterday believe it or not, I had my tea there," he scolded me rather ironically.

When the Session adjourned for tea I followed Khosla faithfully like a shadow. At the entrance a Desh Sevika clad in a white *sari* and green blouse posted herself smartly before him and asked: 'Are you a Member of the A. I. C. C. ?'

His dreamy eyes just opened a little and assertively he replied: "The Press."

The innocent girl nodded assent and we swaggered into the miniature pandal. There were so many luminaries sitting there that the concentrated brightness of the leaders began to dazzle my eyes. It seemed as if a dozen 500 candle power electric bulbs were all lit up in a small room.

We noticed our friend Narinder sitting alone in a corner which rather surprised me, considering his popularity and affable personality. We waded to his anchorite seclusion, and regaled ourselves with sumptuous tea.

After a while I heard a musical voice tinkling with all the melody and rhythm of Manorma. As I turned my head I saw the good old Mrs. Naidu vociferously chatting and joking like a young girl. Immediately I rushed to that corner and waited for an opportunity to talk to her.

I noticed that her personality was as dynamic as it ever was. Age had neither chastened its sharpness nor curbed the volatile material of which it was made. About seven years back when she visited Lahore I once drove her in my faithful little rickety Austin. As I penetratingly looked into her face and compared it with the one I had seen at Lahore, my detective eyes found that age had neither despoiled the serene beauty of its features, nor had the years found their *calender* in the wrinkles of her face. But one thing

was apparent. The former gloss and smoothness was not there. Though the face was full and chubby it looked like a ripe Kulu apple left a bit too long on the tree.

On the head there was another change. Her sleek hair instead of being dark and thick had become wispy and the thin, spare bunch was touselled in a rather indifferent way. Here and there was a number of grey hair or rather an attractive mixture of silver and bronze.

After paying my respects I said to her that I wanted to ask her a few questions regarding the interview she gave to Beverley Nichols. I had hardly finished my sentence when I noticed that her restless eyes had stopped rolling. In anger they stared right into my face. I was rather taken aback and I thought that I had insulted her.

“What interview?” she shrieked like a baby suffering from tummy ache. “I never gave an interview to Nichols. He rang me up and said that he wanted to see me, and I just replied: ‘Come and have tea with me.’”

SELF: You may think that way. Whether the conversation he had with you was a regular interview or not is beside the point. The point in question is whether your talk with him has been correctly reported or not.

Mrs. NAIDU: I don’t care whether it has been or not. That man is simply disgusting, and I refuse to bother my head as to what he says or

writes about me. Now, is there anything beside the book and its mischievous author about which you want to talk to me?

SELF: I am sorry if I have upset you by mentioning the name of the author.

Then there was a little talk about the propriety of giving rejoinders to such books. She maintained vehemently, that books of this type should be ignored and that by giving replies one only adds to their popularity. But I differed from her and persisted in my stand that every lie against India *must* be refuted, otherwise a man in the street accepts it as the truth. He himself has no time to analyse things for himself and the printed word has a sanctity of its own.

II

Since Mrs. Naidu refused to discuss any point arising out of her *interview*, we take *the author at his word* that she did not make any complaints about the prison life in India. Out of this *ommission* he has drawn the most fantastic conclusions. He makes the reader believe that political prisoners are treated with courtesy, that meticulous care is taken that they are well-provided with every necessity of life and that during their stay they are overwhelmed by the love and affection of jail officials.

This is nothing short of adding insult to the injury.

I had the occasion to meet prominent Punjab Congressmen after their "restricted" release from the different jails in the province. Each one of

them was healthy and strong before he was taken into the prison. And each one of them stepped out sick and broken.

Adulterated food had ruined their stomachs. Gastritis was as common in jail as prickly-heat in summer. And the stomachs which were more sensitive got ulcers. The food was so unwholesome that malnutrition caused anemia and quite a lot of them, after a few months in jail, started running low temperatures.

We used to read in newspapers with disquieting regularity of the removal of a Congress leader from the Multan or Gujrat jail to the Mayo Hospital. As one walked on the road girdling the Mayo Hospital one could see three or may be four strapping constables standing all attention around the patient's bed.

It was an inhuman sight. The tragedy of the patient's life became all the more unbearable when their dearest relations were not allowed to go near their rooms. Even the psychological cheer of chatting with one's family members *was* denied.

III

The author is an incorrigible panegyrist of Amery's reign of terror. With great pride he says that these "saboteurs" were not shot as they would have been in any other country at war. By indulging in such egregious lies he attempts to mislead "his American friends." But unfortunately Government's own *communiqués* prick his bubble of lies. News—censored by the bureaucracy itself—

raises its head and shouts in protest and exposes the fallacy of the author's statement. One has but barely to skim the pages of any daily newspaper from August 8, 1942, onward to see how unarmed and innocent people were showered with bullets. They were not made to disappear as the Gestapo would have made them, but they were shot down dead.

Has not the Home Member himself on the floor of the Central Assembly admitted that bombers, flying at tree-height, machine-gunned crowds of men, women and children, scampering in fear and fright? The offensive that the British Government launched against India was so ferocious that responsible British public men and American sympathisers started saying that instead of opening a Second Front in the West, England *had opened* one in India.

And in this all frontal attack the Tommies had their last-minute practical training in the modern warfare methods. The Canadian boys could freely test the efficacy of their improved rifles. The General Staff could boast of the masterly execution of their *advance* according to plan. And Amery swaggered in the India Office with the plumes of Victory.

IV

About our patriots the author says that, "A large proportion of the prisoners were self-confessed saboteurs."

This statement is another instance of the author's determination to pasquinade the work and sacrifices of our patriots. In the first place he should have known that a vast number of Congressmen were arrested before the morning birds chirped the news of the passing of the August Resolution. They were hopefully dreaming of Linlithgow having a friendly *tete-a-tete* with Gandhi, when armed police-men crept stealthily like thieves into their courtyards. Their hopes of co-operation and settlement were rudely smashed. The enemy submarine had sprung up from beneath the ocean to torpedo the unarmed nationalist ship.

As for those hauled up in the early hours of the morning are concerned, may I ask what acts of sabotage did they commit ?

Now a critic would presumably say : " So far so good. But can you deny that a series of acts of sabotage were committed ? And were they not done by Congressmen or sympathisers of the Congress ? "

The answer to both the questions is ONE BIG YES. But the Government by arresting the leaders made the public lose all sense of proportion. It is a matter of human psychology that, in the heat of the moment, people do many things which ordinarily they would never dream of doing. Resentment makes them forget the goodness or badness of their actions . . . bitterness whips up the dormant feelings of revenge . . . frenzy shakes the equipoise of their balanced judgment.

But should this temporary fit classify them as saboteurs? The respect and regard for Congress leaders is so overwhelming in an ordinary man's mind that every insult to his leaders is taken as an injury to his own person and an affront to his patriotism.

The worst and the most callous thing that one can say about these selfless soldiers of India's freedom is that they lost their temper. But when the Call of Patriotism becomes intense, a disposition radically generous and forgiving loses its natural balance.

V

The author's mind is so perverse that in the chastest things of life he perceives wickedness. His wanton way of pouring ridicule on the noblest sacrifices of our countrymen is so irritating that the soberest mind becomes petulant. Look at the way he analyses the mentality of our HEROES: "It was the thing to go to prison. It was smart, it was chic."

Nichols enjoys the privileged position of being one of our rulers. The master only knows how to get his commands obeyed, his wishes fulfilled and comforts realized. For all this he exploits his cringing slaves who helplessly crouch at his feet, because the trident that Britannia holds in her hands points straight into his heart.

But a point is reached when a slave, however, demoralised he may be, refuses to carry further the yoke of his exploitation. He knows that refusal to do so will mean severe punishment. Having made up his mind to be free he considers no sacrifice

too great to regain his lost liberty. And this is exactly the feeling of our brave sons and daughters of India who generated speed into the giant Wheels of 1942 Revolution.

Why should India's brave men shatter their brilliant careers by spending their precious youth within the heartless walls of jail? Why should our prosperous business men let their flourishing concerns go to the dogs by being periodically confined to jails? There is one and only one word which makes them restless, fires their enthusiasm and prompts their action. And *that* word is PATRIOTISM . . . the Call of Freedom . . . the *cry* of starving millions . . . the Voice of LIFE. . .

Instead of appreciating their sufferings Nichols pooh-poohs them as glaring instances of "mass masochism." Instead of praising the sublimity of their sacrifices he lampoons these by saying: "A spell in prison is an excellent financial investment." I have never seen purses being presented to prisoners when they step out of jail gates. Nor have I heard of letters of appointment waiting for them on their desks when they reach home.

Thousands of our young men spend as much of their time in jail as they do outside it. "Once in jail always in jail," is as true in Indian political life as the saying, "Once in debt always in debt," is true in the life of our poor peasantry. There are hundreds of Congressmen still rotting in the jails of the Punjab. They were arrested when the war broke out. The war finished a long time back but their

detention is not yet over. Munshi Ahmad Din, than whom the Punjab knows no better warrior, is still behind the bars. His family today lives on the hunger line. His aged parents look towards the heavens for his release. His children just stare at the dust . . . the dust of which they are made . . . the dust for which their father has dedicated his life.

Nichols is very fond of the word "masochism." To his mind perhaps the pangs in which his mother laboured to give him birth must have been an instance of "womanly masochism." If he thinks that way then our whole argument falls flat. If he does not, then why call our sacrifices "mass masochism." Our patriots suffer in and outside the jail so that from the womb of their sufferings the Babe of Indian Freedom may be born.

If England (God forbid) had been invaded and conquered by Germany, would Nichols sit still and read Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in his study room? Will not his conscience bite his mind to do something for his country? Will he not kick his chair, break his pen and work ceaselessly to drive away the army of occupation? Every sacrifice for England would become a pleasure, every suffering a blessing and every physical discomfort a source of inspiration. Will he cherish the squalid insinuation that his sufferings were born out of self-interest? Will he not rage in anger when he is stigmatised that for the sake of a job he breaks the foreign law and goes to jail? Will he bear the blasphemy that his voluntary

and ennobling sacrifice was proof-positive of “ politico-cum job-hunting masochism ? ”

VI

I beg your pardon. I have made a mistake. I have overrated Nichols, because the very word patriotism stinks in his nostrils. This is what he says of patriotism in his book, *Cry Havoc !* page 209 :

“ I believe, with every fibre of my being, that the hour has struck in the world’s history when every man who wishes to serve his country must realize that Patriotism is the worst service he can offer to it. The time has come when it must be definitely admitted that Patriotism is an Evil artificial mixture of fears, prejudices and superstitions go to form the concept of patriotism.”

You have already read the definition of Hinduism by Nichols as “ a *hotch potch of almost every fear, dream and delusion.* ” The natural equation that follows from the above two definitions is :

Fears + Prejudices + Superstitions = Fear + dream + delusion = Patriotism = Hinduism.

A great philosopher, Nichols ! Is’nt he ?

A great political thinker, Nichols ! Of course he *is*.

It is a wonder that his old Oxford University has not so far conferred the honorary degree of Doctorate of Buffoonery on this clown.

But if the Oxford University people think that one gem of philosophy is not enough to make them

award the Doctorate, I shall ask them to read the following from, *The Fool Hath Said*, page 311 :

“ There is no economic problem, no racial problem, no sexual problem, no unemployment problem, no war problem. These “ problems ” are myths, ugly phantoms.”

VII

Nichols seems to have left all decency on the White Cliffs of the Straits of Dover when he was writing his book in India. His hatred for truth is so irrepressible that it not only makes him report falsely, but even to calumniate all godly men's doings. Look at the way in which he vilifies our patriots. “ The other important factor which is ignored by our critics is the large proportion of prisoners who came from classes so impoverished that prison life, by comparison with their own, was a luxury. And inside, as they well knew, was good food, and clean beds, and no cares for the morrow.”

From where on earth did the author get statistics that a large proportion of these men came from impoverished classes ? What mysterious and confidential White Paper was published by the British Government in which comparative figures and data about the status of Congress prisoners was given ? As a matter of fact the criticism that the Congress is a bourgeois organisation has always been levelled at it.

This statement of the author is so ludicrous that it would make even the jail walls laugh, because they at least knew, what sort of prisoners were caged within them.

If hunger had driven people into jail, the destitutes of Calcutta would have stormed the jail gates. But they preferred to starve on the roads rather than to eat the jail food which they knew was only fit for dogs and pigs. All these people had no home to go to, no clothes to wear and no food to eat. If the life in jail was really a windfall of luxury, the first thing they would have done would have been to commit a theft openly, admit their guilt, go to jail and *enjoy* the comforts that awaited them inside. But they did nothing of the kind.

If the Congressmen who had been detained were well-fed and well-cared for, they would not have come out of jails as if they had been down with enteric fever for twenty-one days. If they had been provided with all the comforts of a home, their condition would not have been that of skeletons who had just come to life and walked out of Lady Wellington Hospital Museum.

The author should remember that nothing but the purest altruism compels them to defy the unjust laws of the land. The indefinable love for the country sustains them. The joy of having contributed their mite to the freedom of their motherland makes them stand up to the savage rigours of jail life.

Sitting far away from their homes the comforting smiles of loneliness alone, cheer our patriots in their extreme moments of despair. Nothing but cheerfulness brightens the shadows of prison walls.

Dear Reader, please stand up and bow to these men to whom suffering is a joy . . . to whom self-abnegation a bliss . . . and finally to whom death the salvation of life . . . a glimpse of the Life Beyond.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A Chef Becomes a Judge

ALL sorts of odious and execrable accusations have been hurled against Gandhi. His much vaunted self-control (I mean sex-control) has been ridiculed by printing photographs of the *Mahatma* going for an evening stroll with his flaccid, bony arms hanging round the shoulders of two young girls. Denigratory captions are given to show that Gandhi is so oversexed that even in public he voluptuously embraces girls. Then it is freely questioned in irresponsible quarters why Gandhi should have a woman secretary (Rajkumari Amritkaur) and a woman doctor (Shushila Nayar).

Again we are told that his much bragged-about creed of non-violence is just a meretricious veneer that hides beneath it the sinister hand itching to drench itself with the blood of the whites. There are scores of other blasphemous charges against this twentieth century Messiah. it is no good defiling the whiteness of this page by putting them in print. The reader must have heard of many more such canards.

But it was left for a God-fearing disciple of Christ like Nichols to accuse Gandhi of being a liar.

Even a man like Churchill who detests Gandhi from the tip of his toes to the bald scalp of his head, has never so lost the balance of his mind as to dub him an untruthful person.

Before I proceed to answer the accusations of Nichols, let me quote a few words from his book *Cry Havoc!* page 231, to show what he thought of Gandhi:

“ Well obviously, one of the most important men in the recent history of the British Empire is Gandhi. We look him up in the index of *The Groundwork of British History*. Odd ! He is not mentioned ! In the G’s where he should be, there is quite a lot about the Gesiths, who were a band of disagreeable savages in the employment of the kings of Wessex long before the Norman Conquest. There is also a lot about the author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. But there is nothing whatever about the man who, according to our elders and betters in the press, may yet be the author of the *Decline and Fall of another Empire*.”

This is Nichols of 1933 ! An honest straight forward pacifist and admirer of Gandhi. The following pages reveal Nichols of 1944—a mischievous and crooked hireling of the Tories, bought to abuse Gandhi.

Journalists, I always thought, value their conscience more than money. But that impression I gathered from the life and work of *native* journalists. Today I find, that a ruling class journalist is a different

person from his Indian prototype. Damnation on the head of this white journalist who defiles *my* profession. I don't lose my temper as the words : " Exception proves the rule " flash across my eyes.

The charge sheet against Gandhi is drawn from an interview that Miss Katherine Mayo, the authoress of the lecherous book, *Mother India*, had with him. During the course of that interview Gandhi gave a message to America at the request of Miss Mayo. That " message " is " reproduced " in *Mother India*. After reading that book Gandhi reviewed it in his paper, *Young India*, to warn " American and English readers against believing this book." With reference to that message which was supposed to have been given by Gandhi himself, he wrote :

" I do not remember having given the message Mis Mayo imputes to me, and the only one present who took any notes at the time has no recollection of the message imputed to me."

Feeling that he has caught Gandhi, the murderer of truth red-handed, Nichols thunders with whoops of joy :

" Unfortunately — most unfortunately for the Hindu George Washington—irrefutable documentary evidence exists to prove that this message which Gandhi and his associates so suddenly and so conveniently forgot, was not only given, but revised and approved by Gandhi himself, typed by his secretary, signed by himself and dispatched to

the authoress with a covering letter—beginning, ironically enough, ‘Dear Friend.’ A photograph of this damning letter, signed by Gandhi, is reproduced in, *After Mother India*, by H. H. Field, page 29.”

The reader will be shocked to the marrow of his bones to learn, that the message which was fairly long was neither reproduced *in toto* nor was its spirit condensed into a few words. Just ten words: “My message to America is the hum of this spinning wheel,” were torn from the context and the meaning misrepresented. Miss Mayo continuing the account of her interview with Gandhi wrote further :

“Then he speaks at length, slowly, with pauses. And as he speaks, the two young men, his secretaries, lying over their slant-topped desk, write down every word he says. The wheel hums steadily on. And the thread it spins for America appears and re-appears in the pages of this book.”

Mother India, the reader must know, appeared after a year of this interview. When the book was shown to Gandhi, he was conducting a hurricane tour of South India. And further, as observed earlier, the message as it was given, was not reproduced, but only a few words were. So in these circumstances was it in any way surprising that Gandhi failed to recognise the parody of his message ?

Miss Mayo had wishfully thought that a great and busy man like Gandhi would not take the trouble of keeping a copy of that message. So

barefacedly, she damned Gandhi in an article in *Liberty* (America) for going back on his message. This paper was shown to Gandhi and he immediately gave a reply to it in, *Young India*, dated Feb. 2, 1928:

“ Her adherence to the statement that I did give her the message she ascribes to me proves her to be guilty of gross supression of truth. She seems to have thought that I would not have a copy of the corrected interview between her and me. Unfortunately for her I happen to possess a copy of her notes. Here is the full quotation referring to the hum of the wheel :

“ My message to America is simply the hum of this wheel. Letters and newspaper cuttings I get from America show that one set of people overrates the results of Non-violent Non-co-operation, and the other not only underrates it, but imputes all kinds of motives to those who are concerned with the movement. Don't exaggerate one way or the other. If, therefore, some earnest Americans will study the movement impartially and patiently, then it is likely that the United States may know something of the movement which I do consider to be unique, although I am the author of it. What I mean is that our movement is summed up in the spinning wheel with all its implications. It is to me a substitute for gun-powder, for it brings the message of self-reliance and hope to the millions of India. And when they are really awakened

they would not need to lift their little finger in order to regain their freedom. The message of the spinning wheel is, really to replace the spirit of exploitation by the spirit of service. The dominant note in the West is the note of exploitation. I have no desire that my country should copy that spirit or that note.

“The first sentence only of the foregoing extract which Miss Mayo quotes without the most important commentary on it, is intended to ridicule me. But the whole paragraph, I hope makes my meaning and message clear and intelligible. I claim, however, that the message, as it appears in the full paragraph quoted, is not different from what I have stated in the article Miss Mayo attempts to shake.”

Does not this rejoinder expose Miss Mayo and conclusively prove that she is a dishonest journalist and an unprincipled person ? The mischief of Miss Mayo and Co., did not stop there. Hary H. Field who had assisted her in editing *Mother India*, wrote a book, *After Mother India*. The sole purpose of this book was to dispell the clouds of controversies that had stormed *Mother India*. But the reader will hardly believe that Field did not think it proper to incorporate in his book this rejoinder of Gandhi. And now again we find Nichols making so much *halla bullo* of this “message” scandal and indicting Gandhi of being a liar. But he too has not the honesty to say a word about what Gandhi said in reply.

I have seen unscrupulous people. I myself have suffered at their devilish ways.

But the demoniac way in which Nichols has behaved is a lesson to all crooked people whose sadism expresses itself in creating factions among friends by fabricating stories and telling lies.

The mischief does not stop here. Nichols persists in his campaign of calumny and says :

“ In this review (of *Mother India*) Mr. Gandhi employs the customary Hindu ruse of inserting little words into the mouths of his opponents, and then challenging them. On this occasion the word inserted was “ always.” Says Gandhi : ‘ She has described the visit to me and informed her readers that there are *always* with me two secretaries who write down *every* word I say . . . this statement is not true . ’ ”

Nichols damns Gandhi as a liar because he inserted the word “ always.” Let us scrutinise the real facts of the case.

May I ask Nichols as to why he inserted three dots in place of the following words of Gandhi : “ I know this is not a wilful perversion of facts. Nevertheless.” Does not the paragraph, if read along with these missing eleven words carry a different meaning ?

Further it must be remembered that Gandhi was *not* quoting verbatim the words of Miss Mayo describing the work done by his secretaries. He was just contradicting *in his own words* the reference to his secretaries. Judging impartially one finds that the word “ always ” does not in any way make any material difference.

Gandhi thus cleared the myth of the word "always" :

"Miss Mayo's reference to my secretaries is a clever attempt to hoodwink the unwary reader. All that could be inferred from my repudiation of the statement that I had two secretaries (whether *always* or not, is not the point) is that Miss Mayo was at least a careless writer if not a wilful perverter of truth. But the manner in which she described the secretaries leaves the reader under the belief that I have always two secretaries.

"Having no case, Miss Mayo has followed the method of the pettifogging lawyer who vainly tries to discredit a hostile but unshakeable witness by making him state things from memory which might be found on verification to be not quite accurate. It gives me pain to have to say that her article in *Liberty* proves her to be only an *unreliable writer* but an *unscrupulous person* devoid of the sense of right and wrong."

While the words "I do not remember" and "always" were dismissed by Miss Mayo in her article in *Liberty* as "trivial quibble" which "released her from the necessity of further considering Mr. Gandhi's criticism at this writing," Nichols has dug them up again and used them with all the pungency of his own comments to establish that Gandhi is fundamentally an untruthful person. He goes to the extreme point of advising Gandhi that

he should look up the meaning of the word " truth " in the dictionary.

II

As I am writing, the following words of Nichols from his book, *Are They The Same At Home*, page 221 ring in my ears :

" I myself am always remembering the wrong sort of things. I can remember rather hard pale line of President Wilson's lips, but I have forgotten nearly all the words that issued from them."

What can you do with a man who admits that he is always (always is not my insertion nor it is of Gandhi's in the above quotation, it is Nichols's own word) remembering the wrong sort of things ?

In the case of President Wilson, Nichols remembers his hard pale line of lips but forgets what he says. In the case of Gandhi, he remembers the word " always " but forgets the long message and the consequent rejoinder.

III

The reader, I can very well imagine, must be swearing at Nichols for being so irresponsible in trying to accuse Gandhi of falsehood and chicanery. By the time the fulminating reader finishes the last few paragraphs, I am sure he will be rolling up his sleeves to give Nichols a rough welcome, if he were to meet him in person. Nichols says :

“ In the Drain Inspector’s Report which is really a museum piece for the student of the Gandhi version of “Truth,” he committed himself to a great many more . . . shall we say . . . misstatements. He not only challenged Miss Mayo, he challenged history itself. One of Miss Mayo’s most moving passages described an ovation given to the Prince of Wales, on his arrival in Bombay. The whole press, not only of India but of Britain and the U. S. was plastered with pictures and accounts of this ovation, which was so spectacular that it made a first class news-story. Here is how *The Times of India*—hardly an irresponsible journal, and one of the three papers which Gandhi reads every day—described events :

“ ‘ The police were almost helpless, they could not keep back the crowds which surged forward to get a closer glimpse of the Prince. Traffic regulations went to the winds. The crowds surrounded his car and cheered . . . such cheering as has never been heard in Bombay before. Even the wearers of Gandhi caps took them off and waved them wildly in the air . . . The rich man in his motor car, the poor man in his rags ; Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsees, Europeans all joined in this final demonstration of loyalty and affection. So large were the crowds that it took the Prince’s motor car ten minutes to cover the last hundred yards.”

The author says that ‘ Gandhi bluntly implies that it never happened at all ’ and quotes his words :

“ She describes an ovation said to have been given to the Prince of Wales, of which India *has no knowledge*, but which could not possibly escape notice if it had happened.”

During my recent visit to Bombay I decided to look up the old files of *The Times of India* to find if such a report existed there or not. My faith in Gandhi’s straightfoward and unbiassed journalism is so unshakeable that I could hardly believe that he would contradict an event *which* actually happened.

Though Nichols is silent about the date of the issue from which the quotation describing the reception given to the Prince is taken, Field in his book, *After Mother India*, refers to “ a contemporaneous newspaper report in *The Times of India*, Bombay dated, Nov. 20, 1921.

Like a thief I searched for this news item reproduced by Miss Mayo. I turned pages after pages, scanned columns after columns and scrutinised every news item but left the office with hands all empty and words of fire in my mouth. I had taken the extra precaution to examine the files right from November 15 to November 30, 1921.

There were more news about the riots than accounts of the Prince’s social-cum-ambassadorial activities. During the whole of the stay of the Prince at Bombay a storm of riots had swept the

population off its feet. And Bombay, during the days of the riots, gives the impression that one has walked into a graveyard. I had seen this for myself when recently riots broke out there. Actually they were no riots, just a few stray cases of stabbing, but still the streets of Bombay after sunset were deserted as if a score of lions had escaped from their cages, and were on their man-hunting expedition. Many a time my friends B. P. Tuli, Khosla and myself would go for a drive during the night and the few people that we would meet were all Punjabis who had gone to Bombay for a good time.

Even during the day, people would just go to their offices and come back home after their work was finished.

Bombay people seem to be so much in love with life that they would take no risk. All their risks in life are confined to the Share Bazar. If that being the mentality of Bombay people (I mean no offence) will anybody believe that they would move out of their closed houses and guarded offices to give an ovation to the Prince at the time of rioting ?

Further it must not be forgotten that both the Hindus and the Muslims had boycotted the Prince. To which ever place he went, a complete *hartal* was declared. Closed doors stared him in the face, the heavy locks resented his presence and the sign boards shrieked : " Go back."

From all these facts of history one is forced to say that Nichols is not only a sly propagandist but a dangerous fabricator as well. Before the shameless contrivances of this "impartial observer" the hideous doings of Borman look like the innocent pranks of a truant boy.

IV

Sometimes I blame myself for taking Nichols seriously. In his previous books every now and then he portrayed his own personality and let the reader have a peep into the working of his own mind.

In, *Are They The Same At Home*, page 205, he frankly like a brave, honest man says :

" *I have an irresistible desire to be gossipy.*"

Again in, *Cry Havoc* page 104, he writes: "Being of an imaginative and highly strung nature; inclined to rush my fences, I approach the problem at the outset with very definite and very highly coloured prejudices."

Can such a person honestly judge other men? Is such a person capable of giving his verdict on India. Nichols is definitely a misfit. He himself knows it, for in, *Are They The Same At Home*, page 148 he says:

" I myself might have been quite a successful chef."

Imagine a chef sitting in the chair of a judge !

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Gandhi Is India

HAVING “successfully” established that Gandhi the man who has devoted his whole life in search of Truth, is in reality a confirmed *liar*, the author proceeds to attack every aspect of his life. He “exposes” the “myth” of his popularity ; ridicules the basic beliefs of his life ; tauntingly laughs at his medieval philosophy ; scornfully derides him for his inconsistencies ; reproachfully twits him for the dangerous role that he has played in Indian politics ; contemptuously upbraids him for not letting India march with the times and finally holds him responsible for the *mess* that India is today.

One by one we shall pick up the author’s statements of *truth* and on our part show that they are nothing else but a hotch-potch of fabrications and mis-statements.

II

“ It is blatantly untrue that he (Gandhi) is India. Gandhi is violently repudiated by the overwhelming majority of 100 million Muslims, who regard him, quite rightly, as their most dangerous enemy.”

If Nichols had told his readers that a section of the Muslim intelligentsia refused to accept Gandhi as its leader, he would have been treading on safer ground. But that in itself would have been of little consequence in arriving at the correct estimation of the man. The Hindus who owe allegiance to the Hindu Mahasabha do not follow into his footsteps, and the *Harijans* who have been stupefied by Dr. Ambedkar decline to march under his banner. And the Communists who have been successfully duped by Mr. P. C. Joshi, at present have nothing in life to do, but to spit at Gandhi for they *have been made* to believe by their Bombay boss that Gandhi is a tool the hands of the Birlas. Little does the rank and file of the Communist Party know that the Stalin of India himself *was* a flunkeyish sycophant of Maxwell.

But still Gandhi works for the good of all. His service transcends the narrowness of religion and his love recognises no barriers of creed. His life is dedicated for the reformation of the miscreants, for the enlightenment of the ignorant and for the uplift of the Communists who are (or were) the shameless cringing lackies of British Imperialism.

The author suffers from a desire to exaggerate things to an extent which even people transported by the wings of fancy into an alluring dreamland do not visualise. A minor rumble he magnifies into a countrywide earthquake. A lonely voice of disagreement, he raises into a unanimous denunciation by the whole community. He is a consummate artist in misleading his foreign readers and a clever

fancier in the art of laying snares for "his American friends."

The other day I questioned four Muslim villagers as to whether they knew who Qadi-Azam Jinnah was. They all looked surprised at this name and naively one of them said that there was no *lambardar* of that name in his village. "Nor in mine either," said his companion who evidently belonged to the adjoining village. My surprise at their ignorance was as deep as their astonishment was obvious. Then I quietly asked whether any one of them had heard of Mahatma Gandhi. I had hardly finished my sentence when all of them in one voice, as if to show off their knowledge, said: "Of course we have." I looked at the man who seemed to be a bit more intelligent than the rest and asked him who he was. In a low tone but deep with sympathy and appreciation he started speaking: "He is a God-fearing man. Though he is a Hindu, he works and suffers for Muslims as well. He is a very good man. But he is as poor as we are, perhaps poorer still. We have a *chaddar* to hang around our waists but the old man has nothing else but a *langoti*. This man is so good that he fights with the Government to reduce our land revenue. We are very thankful to him. Three years back when we heard that he had kept a fast in jail we all used to hold prayers for his life."

This is a verbatim report of the conversation. If Nichols had cared to spoil the polish of his Barret shoes, and walked into any village he would have seen for himself whether the Muslim masses repudi-

ate Gandhi's leadership or acclaim him as their saviour. But he stayed in Government Houses where self-styled and flippant "leaders" interviewed him and filled his ears to the brim with things that served *their* purpose. These people represent the views of the masses, as much as, Mosley does of the British working class or to take a simile from the Punjab, as much as the Communist "leaders" represent the masses and workers of the Punjab. I know the Communists will dismiss it as a Congress lie. I shall ask them, to refer to the election results in the Punjab.

Any foreigner who writes a book on India, all the while, during the period of his "intensive study" of the country and its people, must remember that India lives in her villages, not only geographically and physically but politically and spiritually as well. The voice of a village is the voice of India. The squalor of a mud hut is an index of the poverty of India. The desire of a villager is the ambition of India and his demand for a humane living is the political goal of India.

Let us look towards the Frontier Province and see as to what that province with 95% Muslim population thinks of Gandhi. Their reverence for Gandhi is so profound that fondly they call their leader—*The Frontier Gandhi*. They appreciate the philosophy of Gandhi so intensely that they have not only imbibed his doctrine of non-violence but carried it to perfection in their daily lives.

The author depicts Gandhi as the most dangerous enemy of the Muslims. If that were true, why should Gandhi have indentified himself with the Khilafat Question ? The British Government had shamelessly broken their statutory pledge not to dismember the Institution of Khilafat. The promise given in the days of adversity was thrown to the winds in the drunken hour of victory. The documented assurance given at the time of trial and tribulation was torn as a piece of rubbish in the piping days of peace and security. Inspired by the debasing feeling of revenge and retribution against the Turks, they ransacked the Vatican City of Islam.

Muslim India was outraged to the extent that a grown-up son would be if a ruffian raped his mother. Feelings ran high in India. Resentment gripped the heart of every Muslim. His anger knew no bounds. There was a universal (minus the henchmen of British Imperialism) demand for the restoration of the Khilafat. Gandhi whole-heartedly threw his entire being into the righteous demand and just struggle of his Muslim brethren. In the hour of their crisis he stood by them. By sharing their sufferings he soothed their sorrows. By marching along with them he enlivened their confidence. By placing all his resources at their disposal he sustained their broken hearts.

Needless to say, Muslim India thanked him for his sympathy, blessed him for his support, accepted his co-operation and acclaimed him as *her* leader.

But I hear the critic drawling into my ears :
“That is past history. You Indians always live in the past, think of your dead achievements and dream of their resurrection. Tell me something from modern India to refute the challenge of Nichols.”

It is a good question.

If Gandhi was like a reptile lying hidden in the sleeve of Muslim India, waiting to open its fangs to inject the fatal poison into the virile body of Islam, Azad the greatest Muslim divine of modern times, would not have accepted the Presidentship of the Congress. Nor would the Pride of the Pathans have hitched his waggon to Gandhi's. If Muslims thought that Gandhi was a bigoted Hindu and found him to be their arch-enemy, thousands and thousands of them would not have enrolled themselves as soldiers of India's Freedom.

These are facts of History—History of India in the year of 1946. If the critic disbelieves me I would ask him to refer to the glorious work done by the Indian National Army in which thousands of Muslims mingled their blood with that of their Hindu brethren.

And for whom ? For *you* and *me*.

As we observed earlier there is a section of misguided Muslims, of orthodox Hindus, of ignorant *Harijans* and of frustrated Communists who disown the leadership of Gandhi. But in the general political life of India they are like specks of swart fleeting clouds which in their undestined ramblings just overshadow the serene and chaste light of the

full moon. Just as the eternal light of the moon remains unaffected by these *jealous* clouds, similarly the popularity of Gandhi remains untouched by the repudiation of these minor groups of interested people.

In his unique personality are reflected the aspirations of the masses. In his person he symbolises the intensity of their sufferings. In his revolt against British Imperialism he expresses their seething discontent. His loin-cloth is an index of the extent of India's destitution. Through his fragile and emaciated body stalk the 400 million living corpses of India. He is the hope of the forlorn ; the faith of the helpless, the destination of the stronger and, above all, HE IS INDIA.

He *may* not be the India of tomorrow, for Tomorrow is for Nehru, but Gandhi *is* the India of Today.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Nichols Beats Linlithgow

“**H**E (Gandhi) could have walked out of it (jail) at any moment he chose, by signing a half-sheet of note-paper. He would not have been signing away his soul, he would not have been betraying himself or any body else, nor would he have been influencing in the smallest degree, either for better or for worse, the cause for India’s independence. He would simply have been signing a guarantee not to sabotage the war-effort, not to lay his country open to the Japanese, not to stab the British and American armies in the back. That was all he was asked to do, and he would not do it,” so says Nichols now.

I have just finished the pamphlet in which the letters that were exchanged between Gandhi and Lord Linlithgow were published. My purpose was to find out as to *what* was demanded from Gandhi, the fulfillment of which would exonerate him from all the “crimes” which he was supposed to have committed. All that the Viceroy asked him to do was to “repudiate or dissociate himself from the Resolution of August.”

The terms of surrender as formulated by Nichols are nowhere found in the *Congress Responsibility for Disturbances*. They are just invented by the author to convince the reader that Gandhi was a menace to the Allies and that the dangerous *plans* he had chalked out would have been a severe blow to the prosecution of the war-effort in India. The author in his frenzy to *kill* the personality of Gandhi, not only uses the sabre of fraudulent accusations but degrades himself to the status of a dastard who revels most in hitting his opponent below the belt.

What a clownish specimen of Drakes and Wellingtons !

There is, as seen above, an irreconcilable conflict between the Viceroy's demand and that of the author. To clear the clouds of misapprehension (perhaps wilful misapprehension) which seem to haze the vision of the author, it is essential to examine critically the August Resolution, because the only feasible explanation of this discrepancy can be that the August Resolution, contemplated and sanctioned the use of all these measures, the withdrawal of which was sought by Nichols.

II

The main burden of the lengthy resolution was the National Demand, a demand for the recognition of India's right to independence, and the formation of a National Government. Now if Gandhi was to repudiate this part of the Resolution would not he be "signing away his soul?" Gandhi lives, works and sweats for the freedom of India. If after working

day and night for 25 years he were to dissociate himself from the inherent right of India's claim for independence, he would not only be betraying himself but those 400 dumb and destitute millions who have placed their destiny in *his* hands. The question of influencing the cause of India's independence for better or for worse does not arise, as the foregoing of India's *very* right to Independence was categorically demanded. When the very house in which a person wants to live is demolished, the question of how shall he paint the walls and the kind of furniture he will put in, does not arise.

As far as the insinuation that the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi wanted to sabotage the war effort is concerned, I have read the resolution again but have failed to find a word that refers to this plan.

Looking back we find that Gandhi ever since the beginning of the war was shouting the slogan : " NO EMBARRASSMENT TO BRITAIN."

The war broke out on Sept. 3, 1939. He lost no time to bless Britain with his unconditional moral support. On Sept 5, he wrote : "*My own sympathies are with England and France.*" Thousands of Indians were shocked to read these sentiments. I still remember the words of a dear lady friend : " What ? Gandhi standing by England. It is like a mouse nursing the wounds of a cat who has been just bitten by a dog." But Gandhi, than whom the modern world has not seen a nobler man, in the twinkling

of an eye glided over the terrible relations between England and India. The gruesome tragedy of the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre slipped into the alleys of oblivion before the possible destruction of the House of Commons buildings. And, mind you, it is the Parliament sitting in those buildings that tightens the nuts of India's serfdom.

Proceeding further we find that though the Ramgarh Congress had fully empowered him to start the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1940, Gandhi peremptorily postponed it. Why? Because after the unfortunate debacle of France, the position of Britain became distressingly precarious. America showed no signs of joining the Allies. She was as much concerned with the fate of Europe as a judge is with the victory or defeat of either party in the case which he is adjudicating. Japan though neutral in name was swaggering to the Axis camp, while Russia was still holding Germany in close sexual embrace of "everlasting friendship." England was left alone to face the entire might of Hitler and Mussolini. She had no friend to help her, no "American cousins" to share her sorrows, no Christian neighbours to console her and no Marxists in India to help the police in crushing the freedom movement of their own countrymen which threatened the British Imperialism with extinction.

Throughout the four corners of India, it was freely opined that now the time had come to strike Britain. And the Communists, who later aligned themselves with British Imperialism, clamoured most

for the word "go." But Gandhi snubbed each one of them and exhorted patience. On June 21, 1940, he said in the course of a lengthy statement, explaining his position :

" I am of the opinion that we should wait till the heat of the battle in the heart of the Allied countries subsides and the future is clearer than it is. We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin. The present is no atmosphere for influencing the Britisher in the right direction through civil disobedience."

Later on when the war situation was no more fluid and the Battle of Britain had been won by the R.A.F. boys, he started his movement. Gandhi desirous of avoiding embarrassment to Britain especially during the throes and perils of war limited its scope to a few selected individuals, whose work and creed conformed to certain ethical tests laid down by Gandhi himself.

In consonance with his policy of non-violence, he sublimated the movement into a moral protest. His first slogan to the *Satyagrahis* was : " Purify your hearts. " His discourses on the rules and philosophy of *Satyagraha* winged his followers into the high empyrean of sublime ethics.

Now we come to the year of 1942. At the A.I.C.C. meeting on August 8, the Congress leaders both individually and collectively left no room for doubt about the real intentions of the Congress.

They laid as much stress as human intellect could think of, and human speech could express, on the non-embarrassment part of the resolution.

Gandhi himself made his position clear and said :

“ The Congress has caused no embarrassment to Britain. I have declared already that I shall do nothing to embarrass Great Britain. She will be embarrassed if there is anarchy in India. That the Congress, so long as it is under my discipline, will not support. ”

An American correspondent met Gandhi to learn first-hand as to what the Congress plan was. During the course of the interview he asked : “ But the railways, I hope you won't stop. The services too will be I hope, allowed to function. ”

To this question Gandhi replied : “ They will be allowed to function, as they are. ”

Surprised at this answer the correspondent said : “ Are not you then helping the British by leaving the services and the railways alone ? ”

“ We are indeed. That is our non-embarrassment policy, ” replied Gandhi.

Considering this sunshine-clear attitude of Gandhi towards the British war effort, was it not clownish on the part of the author to seek from Gandhi an assurance “ not to sabotage the war effort ? ” It is like asking a decrepit old man of 77 to admit that he did commit rape and further ask him for an assurance that he will not do it again.

III

Now we come to the third condition—"Not to lay his country open to the Japanese." If the author had cared to glance even cursorily over the August Resolution his eyes would have been scorched by the burning hatred of Fascism with which the resolution was glowing. But he rather let his mischievous brain work than let his eyes see facts as they existed.

Hatred of Fascism was not a new passion with the Congress. In *every* resolution since 1933, the Congress had publicly inveighed against this latest menace to humanity. While the Britishers dismissed the Japanese invasion of China as a "local incident," the Congress roared in anger. When Abyssinia had been trampled over by the might of Italy, it is interesting to note what Nichols himself felt about the victims. While the Congress was observing an Abyssinian Day, Nichols was busy writing the following in his book, *News of England*.

"They (the world) did not realise that Abyssinia was, in itself, a *courtesy expression*, and that the Abyssinians were a collection of primitive tribes, cruel, superstitious, riddled with disease. Those few realists who pointed out that Italy was doing, on a somewhat larger and more efficient scale, what we ourselves had done, time and again, in the past, and that a thorough *conquest by a Western Power would in the long run make life safer, healthier and more agreeable for the Abyssinians themselves*, were regarded as brutal Fascists."

Again we find that while the Britishers, who were but the rumps of Hitler and Mussolini, were supplying armaments to Franco to come to power, Nehru was paying a personal visit to Madrid as a mark of sympathy with the Spanish people and even arranged for a food-ship to be sent there. In his Presidential address at the Faizpur Congress he said :

“ In Spain today our battles are being fought and we watch this struggle not merely with the sympathy of friendly outsiders, but with the painful anxiety of those who are themselves involved in it. ”

When Chamberlain presented Czechoslovakia to Hitler, the whole of Nationalist India stood in revolt against this suicidal policy of appeasement.

Now the question arises : How could the Congress lay the country open to the Japanese when its detestation of Fascism was so intense and its sympathy for the victims of aggression so profound ?

On the eve of the passing of the August Resolution, Gandhi in his famous letter, *To Every Japanese*, broadcast a stern warning :

“ I want India to oppose Japan to a man. There is not the slightest room in me for accommodating the Japanese . . . I want to resist with all my might the charge of inviting Japan to India . . . I have no desire whatsoever to woo any power to help India in her endeavour to free herself from the foreign

yoke. I have no desire to exchange the British for any other rule. Better the enemy I know than the one I do not . . . Remember I am more interested than the British in keeping the Japanese out. For Britain's defeat in Indian waters may mean the loss of India, but if Japan wins, India loses everything."

Fine sentiments of a man who was *supposed* to welcome Japanese with open arms!

The answer to the last assurance—not to stab the British and American armies can be gathered from the foregoing pages. How could Gandhi stab the Allied armies when the defeat of Japan was a common cause between England and India? He not only did not want to stab them but he wanted the armies to stay in India and operate against Japan from this base. To Mr. Beldon, an American corespondent, he said: "India's non-violence can at best take the form of silence—not obstructing the British forces, certainly *not* helping the Japanese."

IV

"He (Gandhi) was convinced that Britain was finished and that Japan had won the war. He was anxious to stand well with the little yellow men, who, he thought, would shortly be his new masters" is the retort of Nichols.

Well dear Nichols, whether Gandhi was anxious to stand well with the little yellow men or not, I shall analyse afterwards. But, you yourself, were most anxious not only to stand well with the

Japanese but were prepared to bribe them to woo their favours, as is clear from your quotation culled from, *The Fool Hath Said*, page 268 :

“The results of a war between England and Japan are too horrible to contemplate. On the other hand, the voluntary presentation to Japan of certain areas in Northern Australia is not horrible to contemplate at all. There is enough room in Australia for the entire population of Japan and the entire population of England, and then some. Of course, if you have a ‘war mind’ you will instantly assure us that the Japanese would fortify the whole of the North Coast of Australia and use it as a base from which to destroy the British navy, and descend with fire and sword over the continent to pillage the rich cities of the South. And if enough men and women think such things of their *neighbours*, they will probably happen. They happened between 1914 and 1918, and they may happen again.”

V

The only way to establish that Gandhi had an unshakeable faith in an Allied victory is to let him speak on the point. At the bottom of that faith was the strong foundation of his confidence in the tenacity and heroism of the British. And that is why, when the Allied fronts were cracking, he maintained that such minor and temporary fissures could never wreck the mansion of Allied resistance.

So I let Gandhi speak :

(1) Panic is the most demoralising state anyone can be in. There never is any cause for panic. One must keep heart whatever happens. War is an unmitigated evil. But it certainly does one good thing : it drives away fear and brings bravery to the surface. Several million lives must have been already lost between the Allies and the Germans. They have been wasting blood like water. Old men, women both old and young, and children in Britain and France are living in the midst of imminent death. But there is no panic there. If they were seized by panic, it would be an enemy more dreadful than German bullets, bombs and poison gas. Let us learn from these suffering nations of the West and banish panic from our midst. And in India there is no cause whatsoever for panic. Britain will die hard and heroically even if she has to. We may hear of reverses, but we will not hear of demoralisation. Whatever happens will happen in an orderly manner.

—*Gandhi Against Fascism*

(2) The recent British reverses ought not to create panic in the land. In all the wars that Britain has fought or in which she has been engaged there have been reverses some of which may be considered disastrous. But the British have a knack of surviving them and turning them into stepping-stones to success, Hence the saying peculiar to them that they

blunder through to success. Failures do not dismay or demoralise them. They take them with calmness, and in a sports man-like spirit. Wars are for them a national game like football. The defeated team heartily congratulates the successful one almost as if it was a joint victory, and drowns the sorrow of defeat in an exchange of glasses of whisky. If we have learnt nothing worth from the contact with the British, let us at least learn their calmness in the face of misfortunes.

—*Quit India*

(3) There will be peace when the exhaustion point is reached. This is mere speculation. Britain may be favoured by nature. She has nothing to lose by waiting. And with America as her ally, she has inexhaustible material resources and scientific skill. This advantage is not available to any of the Axis Powers.

—*The Congress Case*

(4) A correspondent asked him the following question :

“ Is it a fact that your present attitude towards England and Japan is influenced by the belief that you think the British and the Allies are going to be defeated in this war ? ”

To this Gandhi unhesitatingly replied :

“ I have no hesitation in saying that it is not true. On the contrary, I said only the other day that the Britisher was hard to beat. He has not known what it is to be defeated.”

—*Freedom First*

(5) At the A. I. C. C. Meeting on August 7, he said :

“ Never believe that the British are going to lose the war. I know they are not a nation of cowards. They will fight to the last rather than accept defeat.”

VI

Nichols writes :

“ In his newspaper, *Harijan*, at the time of his arrest the following masterpiece of evasion had appeared as an answer to an earnest question.

“ ‘ Q. What may be permitted for disorganising Government within the limit of non-violence ?

“ ‘ A. I can give my personal opinion only. It will be non-violence without blemish.’

“ So far so good. And the next sentence ?

“ ‘ Cutting wires, removing rails, destroying small bridges cannot be objected to in a struggle like this.’

“ Small bridges. An exquisite phrase, Mr. Gandhi ! When is a bridge ‘ small ’ and when is it ‘ not small ? ’ ”

There are three interesting things about this extract from *Harijan*.

Firstly, the reproduction is mischievously done as is clear from the last eight words given below in italics. The answer as it was printed in *Harijan* and later re-printed in Government's Blue Book (or Black Book)—*Congress Responsibility for Disturbances*—is as follows.

Needless to say, the qualifying words are the operative clause of the whole answer. Here is the full text :

“ A. I can give my personal opinion only. In my opinion looting or burning of offices, banks, granaries etc., is not permissible. Dislocation of traffic communications is permissible in a non-violent manner without endangering life. The organisation of strikes is the best, and if that can be accomplished, it in itself will be effective and sufficient. It will be non-violent without blemish. Cutting wires, removing rails, destroying small bridges cannot be objected to in a struggle like this, *provided ample precautions are taken to safeguard life.*”

Secondly, the author of this answer is not Gandhi but K. G. Mushruwala. Gandhi was arrested on the 8th morning, and the date of the issue in which it appeared is August. 23. It was the personal opinion of Mushruwala for which Gandhi is held responsible by Nichols.

Thirdly, Gandhi in his reply to the Government's charge sheet as framed in *Congress Responsibility for Disturbances*, disassociated himself

from this opinion of Mushruwalla. Gandhi took up every point raised by the Government, and refuted the accusations contained therein. Below I give paragraphs 59 and 60 from *Gandhi Wavell Correspondence* in which Gandhi expressed his opinion on the matter :

59. The other example given by the author is an extract from an article by Shri K. G. Mushruwalla in *Harijan* 23rd August, 1942. Shri Mushruwalla is a valued co-worker. He carries non-violence to an extreme which baffles those who know him intimately. Nevertheless, I do not propose to defend the paragraph quoted. He has guarded himself by saying that it represents his *personal* opinion only. He must have heard me debating the question whether interference with bridges, rails and the like could be classified as non-violent. I had always questioned the practicability of the interferences being non-violent. Even if such interference could conceivably be non-violent, as I hold it can be, it is dangerous to put it before the masses who cannot be expected to do such things non-violently. *Nor would I expect the classification of the British Power in the same category as the Japanese for the purposes of the movement.*

60. Having allowed myself to criticise the opinion of a respected colleague I wish to say that Shri Mushruwalla's opinion is no evidence of violent intention. At best it is

an error of judgment which is much more likely in a novel subject like the applicability of Ahimsa practised in all walks of life by masses of mankind. Great generals and statesmen have been known before now to have committed errors of judgment without losing caste or being accused of evil intentions."

It is rather boring to repeat again and again that Nichols is a specialist in truncating ; a past-master in lying ; an artist in suppressing truth ; an inventor of false opinion and above all a (evil) genius in the science of fabrication.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

A Hotch Potch of Lies

“ONE of the strangest paradoxes of modern history is that Congress should be the darling of warm-hearted Western liberals, who would faint with horror if it were suggested that they were themselves tainted with Fascism. For Congress is the only cent per cent, full-blooded uncompromising example of undiluted Fascism in the modern world,” is the charge of Nichols.

Whether the attitude of warm-hearted Western liberals towards “ Dictator Gandhi, ” and “ Fascist Congress ” is a paradox or not will be seen in the following paragraphs. But the attitude of Christian-hearted Nichols towards the dictators of Europe *does* remain a paradox.

May I ask Nichols, the Killer of Dictators, to explain the following anamoly :

“ The various Youth Movements which have sprung up in passionate support of Europe’s dictatorships *are* religious movements, and nothing else, and that the worship of the dictator, whoever he may be, is a religious worship, with the dictator supplying the place

of the Messiah. Youth must have something to worship and the young men who click their heels and cry 'Heil' or 'Duce' or whatever it may be, are, in my opinion, less spiritually degenerate than the young men who drift about loving nothing but themselves and yawning about 'gloomy mergings.'

The Fool Hath Said, Page 310.

The only explanation that I can expect from Nichols may be something like this : "I am a journalist and not a politician. Whosoever pays me for my work, I shall serve him as my Lord, for Christ laid down the principle of earning one's bread with the sweat of one's brow. I am the only journalist who has a fat bank balance. I hope you now understand why I introduced Hitler to the world as the Messiah."

SELF. Of course Buddy, I *know* you. I also understand your *moral* justification in damning Gandhi for he had nothing in the world of his own to bribe you with. At best he could offer half a pint of goat's milk.

II

Coming back to *Verdict on India*, we find that the author proceeds to show by giving certain instances, as to how the Fascist character of the Congress expresses itself in its actual working. But before we consider and refute the charges levelled against the Congress, it would be wiser to know more fully and correctly the meaning and back-

ground of these hackneyed words, Fascism and Totalitarianism. If I were to explain their meaning in my own words, Nichols would jump up and shout : " Another Hindu interpretation." So I ask Prof. Gilbert Murray to come to my rescue.

In his Hibbert Lectures on *Liberality and Civilisation*, he says : " The Totalitarian States reject the whole idea of justice and morality between nations and decide all conflict by the cutting of throats, not by argument." He then quotes the words of Dr. Goebbels :

" The only instrument with which one can conduct foreign policy is alone and exclusively the sword." Dr. Murray then gives glaring instances of the " new tone in education inculcated in Nazi school-books." A history freed from the curse of objectivity is to teach children ' the race questions raised to a dominant place, Arithmetic for children is to dwell largely on calculations about bombing planes and even grammar distorted into abuse of Pacifists and Jews."

The Professor then throws searchlight on the sinister way in which Fascism worked in Japan : " We must prevent the recovery of the Chinese," says Japan. " Let us wreck their finances by a vast campaign of smuggling, protected by our ships of war. Better still, let us start in China, through our own factories and ships under protection of our armies, a vast trade in opium. That will not

only provide a revenue for our armies of occupation, it will ruin the health, morale, and self-respect of the Chinese and make them an easier prey. Better still, let us import heroin, which is more destructive than opium and will weaken them more. Then at a suitable time we can pick a quarrel, destroy the universities, agricultural institutes, and medical schools, exterminate the leaders of the renaissance, and whether we annex great provinces or not, we shall at least have crippled our enemy, destroyed his hopes, and saved our beloved Japan."

These are in short the fundamentals of Fascism. The mighty machine of militarism is driven by the power of racial hatred. Relentlessly it rolls over the liberty of other people, smothers their aspirations, crushes their institutions, and destroys their homes. On their ashes it builds its own empire, the bones of the dead it uses as sticks to drive the living to work for it, women and children it uses as hostages to be shot if men refuse to obey its orders.

This is how it conducts its foreign policy. And the following is the state of affairs in the mother country.

In a Fascist State the war-neurosis is permanently established. Freedom of expression is as alien to its citizens as the power of speech is to a dumb man. Even in peace time the country is on a war basis. Free thought is muzzled. There is a rigid censorship of news. Just as a bulwark is placed

against the onrushing flood, similarly the Fountain of Democracy—the right to print what one sees or feels—is stopped at the source.

Moral sensitiveness is absolutely intolerable to Fascism, for it is afraid as to what human conscience may say. Men must forget that they are individual human beings. They should discard the “myth” that they have a personality of their own. They must behave like automatons. The State is the big wheel. The citizens are its cogs. And of course, their Leader is the *one* and only man who has been chosen by God to move and drive that wheel.

Considering these basic principles of Fascism, will any critic have the audacity to damn the Congress as a Fascist organisation? Is any of these principles reflected in its social, educational, economic or political policy and programme?

The only authority that the Congress wields over the people is moral. *It argues but never strikes, it persuades but never coerces, it suffers but never tortures, it liberates but never enslaves.*

The Congress broke the sword in 1919, and accepted the *Sermon on the Mount* as its guiding star on its journey to Freedom. It obliterated every trace of racial hatred and accepted love as the banner in its march. It discarded secrecy and accepted truth as an infallible weapon of dealing with the enemies who obstructed the progress of its march.

II

Like a fanatic Nichols persists in his harangue that the Congress is a Fascist organisation and says :

“It is Fascist in principle. The Nazi insistence on the superiority of one race, and the necessity of keeping its blood pure, is matched by the Brahmin’s unrelenting claim to dominance and the necessity of maintaining the laws of caste. Just as every Nazi is a superman, so every Brahmin is *Bhudeva*, which means ‘God on earth.’ And Congress is, of course, a predominantly Brahmin organisation.”

To say that the Congress is a Brahmin organisation is as absurd and untrue as the thesis of Hitler that the Jews all the world over had conspired to start and wage war against him.

Not a single Congressman who just happens to be a Brahmin has been foolish enough to give discourses on the superhuman qualities that a Brahmin by reason of his birth is *supposed* to possess. I must have read hundreds and hundreds of speeches by Congressmen who were Brahmins, but never I have come across a single sentiment eulogising the “godly” virtues of their caste. A Brahmin in the Congress is neither conscious of his Brahminhood nor does he harbour any grudge against non-Brahmins. Brahmins and non-Brahmins in the Congress are just Hindus and Indians, just as in Russia the painters and the peasants are workers and Russians.

As a matter of fact the Congress is bitterly opposed to the orthodox Brahmins, and is always at war with them. If the Congress were a Brahmin organisation trying to “maintain the laws of caste,”

will it work for the removal of untouchability? Will not the conservative Brahmins, who *according* to Nichols dominate the organisation, be working against their own interests? Will they not be in the position of a man sitting at the top of a tree and cutting that branch himself with an axe?

Nichols, please ponder over this paragraph before you proceed reading further.

In reality the Brahmins who want to maintain the laws of caste are outside the organisation. They are mostly to be found in the Sanatam Dharam Sabhas and the most bigoted squat on the *Har Ki Pauri* at Hardwar.

The Congress is a national organisation and its constitution rests on adult franchise. Any adult Hindu, Mussalman, Parsi, Sikh, Englishman or Jew can become its member. It is no preserve of any single individual, or of a community, let alone a subsection of community. It is a democratic organisation with the widest intelligent franchise the world has ever seen. For it gives statutory recognition to the dignity of labour. It accommodates all shades of opinion save violence and untruth.

III

Nichols being a hard-boiled propagandist does not feel satisfied with a few lines against the Congress. Now he damns Gandhi as a dictator and puts his case like this :

“ It is Fascist in practice. It is a Gandhi dictatorship. So many examples might be quoted in proof of this assertion that it is

difficult to choose the most telling. Perhaps the clearest was his personal frustration of the British attempt to introduce responsible Provincial Self-Government. The Act of 1935 granted large measures of autonomy to the Provincial Governments. It was completely negated by the Congress Party Caucus dominated by Gandhi. The Provincial Governments were as clearly dominated by the will of Gandhi as the Italian Corporations by the will of Mussolini. If any made even a gesture of independence, the axe descended."

Gandhi is definitely the Father of the Congress. He has nursed the baby that was later on to grow into a strong man to fight British Imperialism. He has spent his life in educating it in the methods to be adopted in the struggle. Just as a sensible father does not interfere with the activities of his grown-up son, so Gandhi watches the brave doings and heroic sacrifices of the Congress. In ordinary life the relationship between the father and the son is unique. The best and the most intelligent of sons, every now and then, sit at the feet of their father to seek advice on the intricate problems of life that confuse them. They accept it, if it fits in with their ways of thinking, and reject it, if it runs contrary to their own ideals. There is no ill-will on either side. Both do their duty.

Similarly, we find that Gandhi in 1934 resigned his 4-anna membership of the Congress and thus severed his official connection with it. He refused to be the sole originator of its policies and the sole guide of its destiny. Though this was the official

position in 1934, we find Gandhi practising it as early as in 1924. In that year the late Deshbandhu Das and the late Motilal Nehru led a revolt against Gandhi, and formed Swarajist Party within the Congress itself. The gulf between the "Changers" and the "No-Changers" had widened. The "Changers" were definitely in a poor minority when the crisis was brewing. But Gandhi never suppressed it. He gave the fullest opportunity to his opponents to place their point of view before the country, educate them and win them over if possible. As time rolled on, his sensitive finger which is always on the pulse of the nation, found that the heart was beating against his programme. Immediately he submitted to his rivals" and handed over the charge to them. Gandhi submits to the wishes of his countrymen with the same readiness as the wind-indicator obeys the will of the air.

Coming back to the recent times we find that at Poona on July 27, 1940, the A. I. C. C. absolved him from leadership. He bowed to the behest of the country with courtesy, affection and confidence, like a child who carries out the order of his mother. He did not precipitate the crisis by demanding a division on the resolution framed and moved by C. R. The country appreciated Gandhi's magnanimity. It praised his broad-mindedness and the A. I. C. C. pandal resounded with the people's approbation. The history of political and party controversies contains few instances in which a great leader threw all his influence and authority on

the side of those who wanted to wrest power from his hand.

Charity like this is as unknown to the dictators as mercy for life is to the atom bomb. Dictators are always in power and occupy the highest place in their country. And look at Gandhi being called a dictator without even having the trappings of the smallest office.

As far as his relations with the Working Committee are concerned, it is best to let him speak on the point :

“I do attend its meetings whenever I am required to do so. I do influence its decision in the matters that may be referred to me and *never* in any other. Many sittings of the Committee I do not attend at all. Of many of its resolutions, I have no knowledge except after they are passed and that through the press. This was the arrangement when I first severed my legal connection with the Congress. What hold I have on the Committee is purely moral. My opinion prevails only to the extent that I carry conviction. Let me give out the secret that often my advice makes no appeal to the members.

—*Harijan* : August 12, 1939.

And for what purpose does he attend the meetings he is asked to do ? To chalk out its political programmes or to interfere with its parliamentary activities ? No. Says Gandhi :

“I attend the Working Committee meetings not to identify myself with its resolutions or even its general policy. *I attend in the pursuit of my mission of non-violence.* So long as they want my attendance, I go there to emphasise non-violence in their acts and through them in those of Congressmen. We pursue the same goal. They all of them would go the whole length with me if they could, but they want to be true to themselves, and to the country which they represent for the time being, even as I want to be true to myself.”

—*Harijan* : August 26, 1939.

Now we come to Gandhi's “personal frustration of the British attempt to introduce responsible Provincial Self-Government.”

Perhaps the author does not know that it was Gandhi who advised the Congress to accept offices. Gandhi had always believed that the real work for the freedom of India can be done only outside the legislatures. Legislatures are nothing else but toys placed in the hands of Indian politicians to amuse themselves. They are no more than playthings to while away their hours of leisure. But, after the Congress victory in 1936 elections, Gandhi asked the country's representatives to occupy the ministerial chairs and utilise *power* that they were given to raise the standard of India's “teeming millions.”

During the period of their office, the Congress Ministries ran the machinery under their control

with unexpected efficiency. Their work was so honest and their justice so patent, that even the Governors were forced to place garlands of praise and appreciation around the Congress shrine. Their wisdom and sagacity evoked the following unstinted eulogium from Lord Linlithgow :

“ Whatever the political party in power in those provinces, all can look with satisfaction on a distinguished record of public achievement during the last two-and-a-half years. ”

Prof. Coupland who wrote the voluminous book, *The Constitutional Problem in India*, is very critical of the Congress. But he too paid glowing tributes as regards the working of the constitution in the Congress majority provinces. The following quotation should serve as an *eye opener* to Nichols :

“ Of the two declared intentions of the Congress, to work the Act and to combat it, the latter fell more and more into the background . . . The (Congress) Governments had more stability than those of any of the Non-Congress Provinces except the Punjab . . . With few exceptions, the Congress Ministers proved themselves capable and hardworking men with a high sense of public duty and responsibility . . . The Legislatures were well-conducted, hard-working and except for an increasing tendency to ask unnecessary questions, business-like . . . Considering the short time legislatures were in session, the amount of legislation they enacted was very large . . . The most important measures were designed to improve the lot of

the agricultural masses, and they achieved a substantial measure of success . . . The achievements of the Congress regime, both legislative and administrative, in the field of social reform, were its most remarkable features. ”

Within the limited scope of their power the Congress Ministries did everything to improve the lot of the poor, to bring relief to the misery of the peasants and to better the condition of the workers. An atmosphere of cordiality prevailed between the Governors and their Ministers. Mutual trust bound the Ministries to the members of the legislature. Confidence in their one-pointed zeal to keep the interests of the masses in the forefront, inspired them to hail the Ministers as *their* saviours.

It seemed that the British Government had forgotten its distrust of the Congress, and having seen the sincerity of its purpose, wanted its full-fledged co-operation. It was fondly believed that the bureaucracy would always stand by the Congress and seek its advice and help in all matters. but that was just wishful thinking.

When Hitler to satisfy his vainglorious whim plunged the world into bloody carnage, following the lead of the British Parliament, the Viceroy of India effected India's entry into the war. He did not think it expedient to consult his Provincial Governments. Even courtesy demanded that he should formally tell them beforehand of his decision.

This dictatorial step lifted the veil. Bureaucracy once again was exposed in all its ghastly nakedness.

Its restless hands were curved to strangle the throats that would dare to whisper any opposition to its methods.

The British had been announcing like the merry larks that the spring of democracy in its fullest blossom had appeared in India. Overnight India realised that it was just a make-believe. The blazing winds that blew from the red-hot furnace of the *Defence of India Rules* seared every flower, burnt the branches and turned the whole tree into a fistful of ashes. India became a desert once again. All rivulets of free-thought disappeared to slake the parched throat of bureaucracy. The desert bristled with the machine guns of Ordinances. The blinding and heavy dust-storms of repression, whose impetuous fury had been for the time being restrained by the Imperial Secretariat, were let loose. They blew with ferocity over India. And with the rapacity of a pirate they swept every freedom-loving being into Forts and Jails.

“Be dragooned and harried from pillar to post, if you want to stay out, otherwise your place is in the cells,” was the alternative placed by the bureaucracy to India.

Nationalist India, in conformity with its self-respect, had to register her protest. *The legislators of every Congress-governed province passed resolutions asking their Ministries to resign.* The Ministries had to obey the mandate of the country which expressed itself through the mouths of representatives it had sent.

So was it Gandhi's frustration which negatived the working of the Act or the dictatorial step of the Viceroy which virtually kicked the Ministries out of office ?

Now a few words about the "Congress Party Caucus" which in plain words is the Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee. Many responsible observers have accused this "Extra Constitutional Body" of controlling the affairs of the Ministries when the latter were in power.

If we look into the parliamentary practice of any country, we find that the party in power has an *inner circle* of its own. There is the regular cabinet, but above it, is the "shadow cabinet." In England the official Cabinet assembles in Downing Street, but unofficially the central direction comes from the chosen few, who meet in Carlton Club or Transport House.

The Tory Bull always sees the Red Rag of a caucus in the party that opposes it. Just read this statement of Amery which he made before his constituency in the last elections :

"The reason why the Socialist leaders did not carry on and finish the job with Mr. Churchill was because they were not merely *leaders but only delegates*. The Socialist Party is so organised that its nominal leaders are all the time subject to orders not only of a Party Conference but of a PARTY CAUCUS which works behind the scenes and outside

Parliament. *During my regime as the Secretary of State for India, I saw such caucuses working when the Congress was in power in the provinces. Such un-Christian bodies do nothing positive. They negative all that comes in their way. We crushed the Congress Caucus in India and so we shall smother its prototype in England. In the name of the Virgin Mary give me your vote to carry on the Holy Crusade."* Italic ours.

And what did Amery get, votes or kicks? Amery instead of sitting in the India Office, now manufactures cathartic pills. He would be well advised to take a few for a couple of years to cleanse his own bowels stenching with caucus and what not.

IV

"Consider the question of uniform. The *khaddar dhoti* and the Gandhi cap are the counterparts of the Nazi shirt and the Swastika," is the next argument in Nichols's mischievous thesis.

This is one of the most ludicrous analogies with which the author has been insulting the intelligence of his readers. Before penning these lines the author should have borne in mind that before the British Europeanised our dress—I mean of the middle class—*dhoti* was our national wear. *Dhoti* is in no sense a creation of the Congress as the party dress.

In the villages of India, men of all religions wear *dhoti* though their style of tying it round their waists is different. Even in the cities of India (barring those of Punjab, Frontier and Sind),

dhoti is still *the* dress of the majority of the educated.

As far as the Candhi cap is concerned, it was worn by Indians before Gandhi appeared on the political stage. It is true that his wearing it, added to its popularity. In South Africa Gandhi used to wear a *turban* on his head. It was not only heavy and cumbersome but expensive as well. From the very beginning in South Africa Gandhi used to wash and clean his own clothes. And the washing of a long *turban* was not an easy job. In the crushing rush of his political work and travelling the extra washing of this head-gear was an unnecessary burden. So he replaced it with a simple small cap. The washing of this cap required but a few minutes, and it dried quickly too.

These *are* the circumstances which led Gandhi to wear it. The simplicity of this cap was so fascinating that it caught the imagination of the people, and the rank and file of the Congress started wearing it. Gandhi never asked the people to wear it as a party dress, nor did he prefix his name to it.

There is not a word about it in any of his writings or speeches. I challenge Nichols to show me any reference.

It is surprising that to-day Gandhi neither wears the cap nor the *dhoti*. How could they be the counterparts of the Nazi shirt and Swastika

when Gandhi the "dictator" himself does not wear them? The Congress President similarly has neither the Gandhi cap on his head, nor the *dhoti* round his waist. He dresses himself in the courtly North Indian costume.

As far as office-holders are concerned they are expected to wear *clothes* made of hand-spun *khaddar*. The condition of cap and *dhoti* is nowhere laid down in the Congress Constitution or in the "Instrument of Instructions" that the Working Committee sends now and then.

If the *dhoti* and the "Gandhi" cap are popular, it is because of their simplicity and cheapness. Moreover, in the hot, climate of the Indian plains, tight clothes make a man feel uncomfortable.

V

"The Congress flag, green, yellow and white, is saluted by the Hindus with the same fervour as the Swastika was saluted in Germany. It is a party flag, pure and simple," is the interpretation of Nichols regarding the flag which is the emblem of our freedom.

Needless to say, every country from time immemorial, has had a flag of its own. It is in a way as much of a necessity to every nation as the learning of alphabet is to a child who wants to be educated.

A flag is sacred to every heart. Do not Englishmen entertain the same sublime sentiments

for the Union Jack as they do for the Cross itself? Why? Because the former represents their political entity and the latter their religious unity. The Hammer and Sickle to the Russians embodies in itself the aspirations of the workers and the ambitions of the peasants. It is to them the very quintessence of their faith that sustains their work and inspires their action. *It was for the Red Flag that the Russians accepted the challenge of Hitler's onslaught.* For its very existence they shed their blood; for its sanctity they suffered untold tortures, and for the glory of its flying high, millions and millions gave their lives, saw their homes being ransacked, their women, molested their elders removed to Gas Chambers and their children riddled with bullets before their own eyes. And when they reconquered the villages overrun by the Nazi hordes, the first thing their proud hands did was to plant the Red Flag on the top of the highest house that had escaped the pillage of the enemy. The flag proclaimed that Russia was still alive. The Hammer shouted to the underground workers to spring up and join the regular army. The Sickle screamed to the peasant guerrillas to come out of their fields and march along the advancing columns.

The Congress Flag is a symbol of India's will to win independence. It is not a party flag. It represents the cherished ideal of the nation. The three colours have an ennobling significance of their own. The dark green represents the depth of our Faith; the brilliant yellow the intensity of our pass-

ion for Unity and the immaculate white the Purity of our methods. And the *Charkha* in the middle stands for our pledge to indentify ourselves with the lowliest in the land. And the pole that holds it, is a measure for the strength of our heart, the vigour of our muscles, the firmness of our purpose and the constancy of our resolution to work for the freedom of which the Tri-coloured Flag is a living emblem.

No wonder Nichols sees evil things in our flag, for it challenges the might of his country, aims at the destruction of his Empire and inspires millions to live, work and die for freedom.

The Congress Flag irritates him because it shouts to him : QUIT INDIA.

VI

“The German ‘Heil Hitler’ has a striking equivalent in the Indian ‘Gandhiji.’ The terminal ‘ji’ is in theory an expression of endearment, in reality it has become a test of orthodoxy. If one did not say ‘Heil Hitler’ in Germany one was asking for trouble, and if one does not say ‘Gandhiji’ in India, one gets it,” is Nichols’s ludicrous exposition.

In South Africa Gandhi did unique work for his countrymen. His sacrifices evoked the greatest admiration that every Indian heart could conceive or the medium of language could express. He raised the Indians from the debased status of coolies, despised, insulted and kicked, to the high status of citizens, socially respected and treated as

political equals. His own life of selflessness, austerity and penance raised his prestige to the skies.

When he returned to India, his countrymen in recognition of his meritorious work and saintly life, started calling him "Mahatma (great soul) Gandhi." But Gandhi himself felt embarrassed because he knew fully well of his own weaknesses and was conscious of his imperfections and human failings. Further, his prophetic vision made him see that the magic of the word *Mahatma* would hypnotise the masses into a kind of hero-worship. He also sensed the danger that men would start following him blindly because the prefix *Mahatma* would raise him to a spiritual level higher than that of his ordinary countrymen. So he passionately appealed to them to discard this veneration and treat him as one of themselves. He further said that those who respected him and his work should just call him 'ji' in the same sense as a brother calls his brother 'ji' or two friends address each other and suffix 'ji' to their names. 'Ji' is nothing else but a mark of regard and an expression of respect.

In books written by Indians we find that sometimes he is referred to as Mahatma Gandhi, and sometimes as Gandhiji, and more often than not, simply as Gandhi. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramya in his book *History of the Congress* refers to him many a time as Gandhi. And, mind you this book is the recognised and official history of the Congress. In my own books I call him Gandhi and never use the honorific title of Mahatma or the suffix *ji*.

Nehru in his *Autobiography* explains the significance of 'ji' in the following words:

"I have seen some extraordinary explanations of this 'ji' in books and articles by English writers. Some have imagined that it is a term of endearment—Gandhiji meaning 'dear little Gandhi.' This is perfectly absurd and shows colossal ignorance of Indian life. 'Ji' is one of the commonest additions to a name in India being applied indiscriminately to all kinds of people and to men, women, boys, girls and *children*. It conveys an idea of respect, something equivalent to Mr, Mrs, or Miss. Hindustani is rich in courtesy phrases and prefixes and suffixes to names and honorific titles. 'Ji' is the simplest of these and the least formal of them, though perfectly correct."

The author sees a striking resemblance in Gandhiji and Heil Hitler. He conveniently forgets that in Germany when Germans met and parted instead of saying: Good morning and Good night, they had to shout at the top of their voice Heil Hitler. Hitler was to the Germans the Day itself—morning, noon and evening. And later on they found that he was to be their *night* as well.

In Germany, the Nazi friends of Nichols would always have greeted him as Heil Hitler but did any body in India greet him with "Gandhiji?"

The only resemblance that I have found in Gandhi and Hitler is that both are vegetarians and teetotallers. Beyond that they are as different in

temperament, attitude and methods as a dove is from an eagle.

VII

“The acid test is his (Gandhi’s) insistence on infallibility. It is the first and the last justification of all dictators,” is the criminal concoction of Nichols.

The author betrays a rank (or perhaps wilful is the right word) ignorance of Gandhi’s views. Not only that, he twists his ideas in such a crooked way that a diametrically opposite meaning is gathered from them.

Now, may I ask Nichols in what year and on what date did Gandhi boast of his infallibility, leave alone his subsequent insistence? It is one of the most hideous lies that the author has been busy inventing while studying India “intensely” for a year. The truth is that day in and day out, Gandhi repeats, repeats *and repeats* that he is an ordinary man, liable to commit mistakes that any other human being commits.

The best way to expose Nichols would be to let Gandhi speak for himself :

“I am an erring mortal like you. I have never in my dream thought that I was a *Mahatma* (great soul) and that others were *Alpa atama* (little souls). We are all equal before our Maker.”

* * *

“I claim to be a simple individual liable to err like any other fellow mortal. I own,

however, that I have humility enough in me to confess my errors and retrace my steps. ”

* * *

“ Whenever I see an erring mortal, I say to myself I have also erred. ”

* * *

“ For myself, I am gifted with enough humility to look even to babes and sucklings for help. ”

* * *

“ A seeker after Truth cannot afford to be an egotist. ”

* * *

“ I claim to have no infallible guidance or inspiration ” —*The Unseen Power*

“ I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow beings wear, and am therefore as liable to err as any. ”

—*Gita The Mother*

“ When Non-co-operation was in full swing, and when during the course of the struggle I confessed to an error of judgment, a friend innocently wrote to me : ‘ Even if it was an error, you ought not to have confessed it. People ought to be encouraged to believe that there is at least one man who is infallible. You used to be looked upon as such. Your confession will now dishearten them. ’ This made me smile and also made me sad. I smiled at the correspondent’s simpleness. But the very thought of encouraging people to believe a fallible man to be infallible was more than I could bear. ”

“A knowledge of one as he is, can always do good to the people, never any harm. I firmly believe that my prompt confessions of my errors have been all to the good for them. For me at any rate they have been a blessing. ”

—*Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi*

“It is best to own the error. It is sure to add to our strength. Error ceases to be error when it is corrected. ”

—*The Mind of Gandhi*

“I am always ready to correct my mistakes. A full and candid admission of one's mistake should make one proof against its repetition. A full realization of one's mistake is also the highest form of expiation. ”

—*The Good Life*

“I have always held that it is only when one sees one's own mistakes with a convex lens, and does just the reverse in the case of others, that one is able to arrive at a just relative estimate of the two. ”

—*My Experiments with Truth*

I could have filled pages and pages with quotations to show that there is no such aberration in Gandhi's outlook which makes him lay any claim to infallibility. Now I give a few instances from his life when *he himself of his own accord admitted his mistakes* and made ample amends.

After the Chauri Chaura riots in 1922, Gandhi coined the word “Himalayan blunder ” to express

the magnitude of his error in launching the Non-co-operation Movement, without first fully preparing the country in the art of non-violence. Immediately he retraced his steps, withdrew the Movement which was at its zenith and did a penance in the form of abstaining from food for seven days.

After a few days of fasting at Rajkot, as the reader remembers, he appealed to the Viceroy to intervene. The Viceroy did, and appointed Sir Maurice Gwyer to arbitrate the case. The Award was given in Gandhi's favour. But suddenly Gandhi realized that the purity of his fast had been vitiated by *his appeal to the Viceroy*. His sole purpose in placing his body in the crucible of suffering was to melt the heart of the Prince, and thus make him right the wrong. Gandhi lost no time in making public declaration of his craven lapse in listening to the cries of his withering flesh, and thus belittling his supreme faith in the Justice of God. He categorically renounced the terms of the Award. The people of Rajkot were dismayed, his coworkers were confounded, but smiles irradiated the faces of his critics. His enemies jeered at the strange way in which he handled the fate of millions.

So what ? Truth *is* greater than politics.

But Gandhi remained undisturbed in his resolve ; undaunted in his determination and obstinate in his decision to forego the fruits of the Award.

Legally he was within his rights to see that the terms of the Award were given effect to, but morally

their implemention would have weighed heavily on his conscience. Having committed a spiritual sin could he see its perpetuation just to save his face ? Having strayed from the path of Truth, could he afford to pursue the wrong path in order to *appear* true to the world ? *Renunciation of the Award meant a great political loss, but the moral gain was incalculable.* If Gandhi had accepted the Award, his political victory would have meant his spiritual defeat and even death.

Now Nichols, is this the way the Western prototypes of the Indian "dictator" behave ? Do they ever make a confession of their errors or even at heart *realise* it ?

The author writes that just as Hitler said : " I am the German people, " or Mussolini said: " The Duce is always right, " Gandhi says : I am the Hindu mind. " For the last few years, since I have left my studies, I have been a keen student of Gandhian literature. There is nothing that Gandhi has written which I have not read. But I have never come across the words of Gandhi saying : " I am the Hindu mind. " It is a pure case of fabrication. Through out his book, the author gives the name of the book and the number of page from which he excerpts a quotation, but in this case he just keeps mum. I can understand his misinterpreting Gandhi's writings because his sole object was to ridicule him. But first putting words into Gandhi's mouth and then condemning him is simply unpardonable.

Another criminal distortion of truth by the author must also be mentioned. He writes, "God has

chosen me as his instrument . . . Gandhi has said on a number of occasions. So has Hitler. So has Mussolini."

The book, *Gandhi is India*, is lying before me. On page 10 the full quotation is as follows:

"God has chosen me as his instrument FOR PRESENTING NON-VIOLENCE TO INDIA, FOR DEALING WITH HER MANY ILLS."

But Nichols true to his baser self omits the words which run after the seven words he has quoted.

I feel sorry for Mr. and Mrs. Smith and Nichols's "American friends," who would take the writings of Nichols at their face value, and thus spoil the chastity of their clear thinking and correct information.

But Nichols was more concerned with the wishes of Tories for they had paid him well than with the souls of the above mentioned people.

Christ is in the soul and Satan in the money. So whom does Nichols worship? The great apologist of Christ sings the songs of Satan. But Nichols would laughingly retort: "Look, what Emerson wrote: 'Consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds.' Mine is a great mind as my inconsistency clearly proves."

I bow to Nichols and admit my defeat.

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

The Non-Violent "Atom Bomb"

NICHOLS in his desperate attempt to establish his accusation that Gandhi is an arch Fascist, now attacks his economic philosophy and tries to hoodwink an unwary reader by saying :

"We are still faced with the incontrovertible fact that what he says invariably leads, directly or indirectly, to Fascism.

"Consider his economic 'policy' if it can be dignified by such a term. It begins, ends, and has its entire being in the *charkha* . . . the spinning wheel, which is linked in his mind with the conception of 'non-violence.' If only the peasants will weave their own cloth, in their own homes, and go on weaving it, and accept the most intolerable impositions of the rich Hindu landlords with non-violence, then all will be well. All the economic evils of India will disappear and *Swaraj* will be automatically won.

"If any man were to preach such moonshine in any other country but India he would be regarded, not as a statesman or an economist, but as a low comedian. The doc-

trine of *charkha* is about as practical as the suggestion that unemployment would disappear in the U. S. if only the American housewife knitted her husband's socks. *Charkha* has, of course, a minor value, in that it is a blow aimed at the Lancashire cotton industry, but that it is in no way a serious menace to big business is proved by the fact that Gandhi's most ardent supporters are the Hindu mill-owners and the millionaires of the steel combines, whose profits are largely dependant on sweated labour. Naturally, they are delighted by Gandhi's propaganda, which aims at convincing the peasant that apart from the hated British Raj he is best as he is, that there is no need for him to strike for better pay, nor acquaint himself with the true facts of his exploitation. The crude and blatant exponents of Hindu capitalism could wish for nothing better than this vast pool of serfs, sunk in ignorance and superstition, sworn to non-violence, with all their grievances conveniently concentrated on the British bogey. For the Fascist boss, such a state of affairs is as near to paradise as he is ever likely to attain. But for the Indian people, Gandhism is mass suicide. In the words of Roy :

‘Gandhism was created by the ignorance, the blind faith, and hero-worship of the backward Indian masses. Gandhism is the expression of the worst in our people, of its ignorance, its cowardice, its defeatism, its backwardness.’”

The author suffers from an incurable obsession and he feels that from Gandhism emerges Fascism in the same way as darkness emerges from night. He bitterly attacks the doctrine of *Charkha*, ridicules its possibilities, chides its medievalism, and misinterprets its function in the economic life of India.

In its music perhaps he hears the thumping footsteps of storm troopers, in its wooden framework he detects the colossal machinery of Gestappo in action, and in the yarn that it spins he sees the strong rope to strangle democracy.

The reader should not feel irritated at Nichols's interpretation of Gandhism when he reads the following "gem of wisdom" of Nichols as given in *Are They The Same At Home?* page 66. He will just laugh it off:

"To me, convinced of the futility of any sort of political system whatever, the argument of temperament as a basis of political thought makes an instant appeal."

Since Gandhi deals with cold naked facts from the every day life of India, how could Gandhism make an appeal to our temperamental Nichols?

If Freud were alive, he would have dragged Nichols into his laboratory and after studying him would have evolved some new revolutionary doctrine of politico-cum-economico-cum-sexual perversion.

In order to arrive at a correct estimation of the place and purpose of *Charkha*, we have to make a general survey of the economic conditions of India.

The author perhaps does not know (for he nowhere mentions in his book) that the average per capita income of an Indian is the lowest in the world. Six pice (less than two pence) per day. Even this frightening figure is grossly incorrect. How? If a person wants to ford a river because he is told that its average depth is four feet, he is bound to be drowned. The reason is as obvious as the colour of a rose. This depth of four feet is not the *actual* and *universal* depth of the whole of the river. Near the banks it may be but a few inches, while in the middle it may be twenty feet. Similarly this average income of six pice includes the daily salary of one thousand rupees per day of the Viceroy, and the unassessed incomes of *Rajahas* and millionaires. Needless to say, thousands and thousands of people in India must be having no income at all. This is the India of *today*, in the year of 1946 !

Now the dreadful problem that haunts Gandhi day and night is this: Must these people who have no income, wither away gradually from starvation? Must these moving skeletons flock into the cities like a swarm of ants and search for dry crumbs of bread? Failing that must people fit for work stretch their shrivelled palms and ignominiously beg for food? And still failing, that must these unfortunate members of Indian society turn into thieves and thereby outrage their pride, respect and manhood?

The problem of beggary is already painful and distressing. And one shudders with horror at

the grim spectacle of what India would be like, if all our famishing villagers were to storm the cities with the placards of HUNGER stuck on their hollow bellies.

Considering all these circumstances, Gandhi whose only concern in life is to remove this curse of poverty, placed *Charkha* before the unemployed. By plying *Charkha* for eight hours a day they could earn eight annas in normal times and much more in these days of high prices. Is it not more honourable to earn eight annas per day than to degrade oneself by begging? Every anna to a person living on the hunger line is *more* precious than the Koh-i-Noor diamond itself. The *Charkha* is so simple to ply that not *only* women but men can work at it, and small children can help their parents in the various processes of carding cotton. This is as regards the persons who are unemployed.

As far as the Indian peasant is concerned Gandhi asks him to supplement his income by plying the *Charkha in his days of leisure*. It is an indubitable fact that for more than four months a year the peasant has nothing to do in the field. Must he sit idle and gossip away these four months of his life? Is it not proper that he should do something productive in these months of no work?

No one denies that the *Charkha* way of earning one's livelihood or supplementing one's income is ludicrously low, but what is the alternative? Gandhi has time and again publicly challenged the

economists to come forward with a *better way* of earning money which could be *universally* practised by the whole of unemployed India. And he has promised that he would not only burn the *Charkha* but make it his life's mission to popularise the better way. But economists and critics talk *at* the "low comedian," they talk *about* his "medievalism," but none has the confidence to talk *to* him, and convince him of his "error."

Now the question arises—Why does Gandhi ask educated people who have good jobs and fairly high incomes to spin? The idea is that people who are sunk deep in the mire of helplessness fail to realise the wisdom and efficacy of the *Charkha*. So he pleads with the rich and the high to spin an hour or so a day to set an example to the poor. It is a matter of human psychology that what the elders and the betters do, the man in the street (or village) follows.

This is true in the whole world.

II

Gandhi has built up the gigantic organisation of All-India Spinners' Association. It has branches all over India. This band of selfless workers tends to the cares and needs of the poor villagers as a nurse does to the requirements of her patient. They collect the yarn spun by the villagers, pay them outright at scheduled rates and then hand it over to the weavers of that very village. The A. I. S. A. being an humanitarian institution makes no profit for itself and sells the cloth in the cities at cost price.

It is a recognised fact that more than 30 crores of rupees have been paid so far to the spinners, weavers and dyers in the form of wages . . . 30 crores to men who would *not* have earned a penny otherwise . . . 30 crores to starving souls who had no means of buying food.

No one but a "low comedian" could have brought this miracle into being.

The author says : "*Charkha* has a minor value in that it is a blow aimed at the Lancashire cotton industry."

This is a blatant lie and an outlandish misrepresentation of facts. If Nichols had cared to study the Congress Resolutions on the point, he would not have been so irresponsible in making such a childish statement. What Gandhi has been preaching all along is the boycott of ALL FOREIGN CLOTH. Has the word Lancashire figured in any of the Congress Resolution ? Is there any reference direct or indirect in any of the numerous writings and speeches of Gandhi that British cloth alone is to be boycotted ?

On the other hand we find that once a resolution was moved in 1929 to the effect that British goods should be boycotted. It was to be applied as an economic sanction for not conceding the National Demand. But Gandhi opposed it and convinced his fellow Congressmen that by passing such a resolution they would be denying their creed of non-violence. By picking up Lancashire exclusive-

ly as a victim of their boycott, Gandhi proved to them that they would be expressing their anger and hatred against the British. And a non-violent man harbours no ill-will against *anybody*. He runs away from hatred at the same speed and quickness as a fish swims away from a drain full of filth and stagnant water.

Foreign cloth was boycotted and is still boycotted because it is a terrible drain on India. When India herself can produce cloth why should she patronise the cloth of Lancashire or of Tokyo? By buying foreign cloth are we not impoverishing our spinners and weavers by throwing them out of employment?

Can Nichols, the great "economist" deny it?

If Lancashire is adversely hit, it is none of our fault. Must a man who wants to give up drinking keep on patronising the grogshop on the self-deceptive plea that the owner of the shop would starve if his customers discontinue giving him business? Must an Indian disdain to buy cloth spun and woven by his needy countrymen on the ground that a labourer in Lancashire would lose his job? Must India keep on sending gold to England to enable Mr. and Mrs. Smith to lead a life in luxury while she herself should languish in poverty, droop with want and finally wither away into the oblivion of destitution?

To this there is one and only one answer, and that is, one big NO with a capital N.

Whether Nichols likes the answer or not, is totally irrelevant.

Charity begins at home. It is my first moral and social duty to look after the needs and wants of my nearest *neighbour*. And who is my neighbour? The half-naked, emaciated villager from Patoki or the well-dressed Lancashire labourer?

Beverly Nichols in his book *Cry Havoc !* reproduces a conversation between Yeats Brown and Men-nell whom he had specially invited to discuss the various problems arising out of pacifism. On page 183, the following appears :

YEATS BROWN : It seems to me more gentlemanly to stick a bayonet into a man than to ruin him economically as Mr. Gandhi is ruining the cotton spinners of Lancashire.

MENNEL : I admit that our economic system is more subtle in its cruelty, but if you had seen Gandhi in Lancashire and heard him talk to the cotton operatives, you would have realised that *he was trying to save them not to ruin them*. After all he came from the Indian villages whose inhabitants had been made destitute by the importation of English cloth. He wanted to bring the workers of Lancashire into one great scheme of co-operation with the workers of India of which the animating principle was love.

And Nichols himself admits after carefully listening to the discussion that "my main conviction was overwhelmingly in favour of Men-nell."

Why did Nichols change his "conviction in 1944 as regards the Lancashire industry?

Mennel on reading *Verdict on India*, must have cried havoc !

III

The author pooh-poohs the dictum of Gandhi that through *Charkha*, *Swaraj* can be won. Let us probe into the possibilities of the wheel and examine its efficacy.

It is an undeniable fact that England holds India in bondage with the avowed object of exploiting her resources and thereby enriching her coffers. India is no sanatorium where convalescent Britishers come to recoup their lost health. Nor is India studded with Vichy-like springs whose wholesome minerals tone up impaired digestive systems. Nor do the Britishers come to India with any humanitarian motive of educating the "black people" whose life they mistakenly believe to be an unending chaos of fear, superstition and ignorance. Greed brought them here. Greed prompts them to stay here. And so long as India slaves for them, and their greed is satisfied, they *will* stay here.

Napoleon correctly described the English as a nation of shop-keepers. Nichols himself says in *News of England*, page 14 : We are *not only* a nation of shopkeepers but a nation of usurious vandals."

As pedlars they set their foot on the soil of India, as vendors they travelled from province to province : as astute and shrewd businessmen they govern India today.

Looking back we find that as soon as England got hold of the reins of political power and was comfortably settled in the saddle of India's slavery, the first thing that the mad horse of British Imperialism did was to trot over and destroy the green fields of indigenous industries. Is it not an historical fact that the thumbs of our master weavers were cut by the monstrous ancestors of Mr. and Mrs. Smith? The silken shawls woven by these artists were pieces of beauty and art. The queens of Europe and the Duchesses of England proudly wrapped them round their shoulders while going to attend evening parties.

India before the advent of British rule was doing a roaring export business in finished goods. But the first sinister phase in which British Imperialism made itself felt in India was to reverse the process of our foreign trade i.e., India was to export raw material and import finished goods made out of that *very* raw material.

Cloth in every country tops the list of consumer goods. When Indian spinners and weavers had been liquidated, there was a depressing slump in the cotton market. Cotton was there, but there were no spinners to buy and spin, and no weavers to purchase the yarn to weave. The poor grower of cotton had to sell off his produce to pay his land revenue. The Britishers smilingly crept into the market. In patronising tones they asked for prices and as *God-sent* benefactors came to the rescue of the grower, harrassed by the agents

of Revenue Collectors. They bought cotton at dirt cheap prices and exported it to England. Before the next cotton bud blossomed, the finished cloth was in the market.

With the ashes of *Charkha*, the foundations of factories in Lancashire were laid ; on the ruins of the loom, the vast English weaving industry was built ; with the blood from the thumbs of our weavers the Lancashire spindle was lubricated. *By creating unemployment in India, Britain solved the problem of her own unemployment.* By kicking our spinners into the dismal abyss of confusion, she brought orderliness into her own economic life. By throwing our weavers into the chaos of helplessness, she made her population strong and prosperous. By extinguishing the earthen oil lamp in the mud hamlet, she electrified her own counties.

This is the record of the British Rule in India, and the achievement of her administrators.

Evidently, the well-read Nichols does not know anything about it.

It is a self-evident truth that if this ugly factor of greed were removed from Indo-British relations, Britain would have no interest in policing India. But how that is to be done, is the intriguing question. British economists themselves have admitted that the British Government has not only wilfully thwarted every local effort to start new industries, but *crushed* every new concern that was started inspite of the obstacles placed by the British Government in the way of our industrialists. The British Gov-

that another world-war would, in all probability, shatter what is left of civilisation, and weaken the Empire that it would be a prey to the forces of barbarism.

“ These are not suppositions. They are facts so obvious that apologies are needed for stating them.”

Hold on. Don't start thumping Nichols on the back. He has better things to say as yet. Read this :

“ Now, what would a Christian dictator of the British Empire do ? (A Christian dictator is, of course, a contradiction in terms, but the phrase will suffice for the moment).

“ Presumably, he would call a conference of the Empire and say, very simply and concisely : ‘ Is it really for the benefit of the world that we should cling to every inch of the territory which, at the moment, we possess ? Would it really be working against the world's peace if, in some cases, we handed over territories back to the races from whom we seized them, and in other cases, if we stood aside and allowed the pent-up populations of other powers to use them for their own people ?

“ The very possibility of such an occurrence is enough to cause the blood pressure of the press lords to rise to heights hitherto unrecorded by medical science. It is so obvious to them that all those red British

patches on the world's map were painted by God, that the very thought of any of them being shaded with black or even faintly diluted with yellow is akin to blasphemy."

Needless to say, by yellow Nichols meant Japan.

If you had only read the above mentioned quotation of Nichols and no other word written by him you would have saluted him with, "Jai Hind, Netaji Nichols." And further you would have requested the Congress to take this gem of an Englishman as a Member in the Working Committee.

But unfortunately after expressing such sublime sentiments, Nichols started digging the grave of his own political career. And finally little did any one know that he would cook the goose of his own reputation by spitting words of fire in *Verdict on India*. I am sorry for his soul becoming the victim of his opportunism.

In, *The Fool Hath Said*, we found Nichols taking to task the men of his own country for holding India in bondage. But in *News of England*, page 306, we find Nichols inspiring his countrymen by these words: "There is one thing worth fighting for, and that is the British Empire."

Nichols seems to have as many "brains" in his head as fingers on his hands. From a pacifist he suddenly becomes a war lord. From a supporter of colonial people, he turns into a slave driver. From a worshipper of dictators he runs amuck as their arch-enemy. From a "follower" of Gandhi

he emerges as the sworn enemy of this "true son of Christ."

Of what things is Nichols made? A flash of eccentricity! Or a sluggish mass of buffoonery!

Since I can't make up my mind, I let Nichols describe himself from *News of England*, page 312: "*I was called a hypocrite, a militarist, a turn-coat.*"

I am glad the Englishmen have the same opinion about Nichols as we poor, ignorant Indians have.

V

Some of the things said by Nichols in his book, *The Fool Hath Said*, are so interesting and intelligent that I feel like quoting him at length. Believe it or not, when I read the following sentences, I was at my wit's end to find that I was glancing over *Verdict on India's* guttersnipe's views. I said to myself: "Nichols could not have said that. It was Gandhi speaking on the evils of industrialisation."

But as Gandhi had never met Ford, I felt convinced that it was not Gandhi but Nichols who wrote it. Here are the mysterious words which you are itching to read:

"Two unemployed workmen were watching an immense steel excavator that was shovelling tons of earth out of a pit which was to be the site of a monster swimming pool. A dozen men, in all, were engaged in looking after the machine.

" 'Blimey, Bill,' said one to the other, 'if it weren't for that machine, there'd be five 'unred men on that job with shovels.'

“ ‘ Yes,’ said his friend. ‘ Or fifty thousand with teaspoons.’ ”

“ When you have subdued Nature with a vast-machine, you are not going to tickle her with a teaspoon.

“ And yet, we go on, searching for new markets, like a lot of frenzied washerwomen scrubbing each other's night shirts, when there aren't even enough night shirts to go round ! The blindness of the economists is baffling to the average intelligent man. They go on shouting ‘New Markets; New Markets !’ when they can hardly hear themselves speak for the roar of the machines which are flooding all markets.

“ Here is another story which may make you think. A conversation I had with Henry Ford, before the ‘depression.’ It illustrates the strangely constricted mind of the average great industrialist, who sees in New Markets the panacea to all problems. We talked in this fashion :

“ Ford : I shan't be content till every workman in America has a Ford Car.

“ Myself : And when he has ?

“ Ford : We're already starting mass production in Europe.

“ Myself : And when everybody in Europe has a Ford Car ?

“ Ford : I shall start on the negroes in Africa.

“ Myself. And then ?

“ I forget Ford's answer to the last ‘And then.’ The only logical answer, of course, would be that

having sold Ford Cars to everybody on this earth, he would have to start a commercial conquest of the moon. Indeed, there is a good H. G. Wells fantasy in that idea. A trade war among the planets compelled by the inevitable exhaustion of the markets of this world, and ending in the equally inevitable war of men and guns, waged in the sacred name of Profit.

—*The Fool Hath Said* : Page 280.

“Firstly, the machine has developed, in the last few decades, out of all recognition, and the Age of Leisure, so long dreamed of by philosophers, has actually arrived. Secondly, an outworn system of ethics (not based on Christianity) has affixed to the Age of Leisure the ugly label of the Age of Unemployment.”

—*The Fool Hath Said* : Page 282.

Thousands of tons of fruit are allowed to rot every year in the colonies because it is not ‘economically’ profitable to transport it to England. At the same time millions of tons of shipping lie idle, which could transport the fruit, and thousands of merchant seamen are unemployed, who could man the ships. And finally, millions of people want the fruit yet the fruit remain to rot.

—*The Fool Hath Said* : Page 284.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Why Nehru Follows Gandhi

IN order to build up his case that Gandhi is a “mystic mumbo-jumbo” and a “mad hotch-potch with all the spells of medievalism” the author refers to Nehru’s “mental struggle which he has been constantly obliged to wage in his endeavour to reconcile the conflicting claims of loyalty to the *Mahatma* and the integrity of his own vision of the modern world.”

I take the words of the author, in trying to describe the feelings of Nehru, at their face value.

Nichols will not have the hardihood to deny that every country has its own individual problems—economic, social and political. Their idiosyncracies baffle the theorists : their whimsical moods confound the doctrinarians, and their capricious traits embarrass dogmatists. Any attempt to prescribe a universal remedy true for all times is as much fraught with danger as prescribing quinine for every kind of fever !

Nehru undoubtedly is a finished product of Western Civilisation. His way of thinking is *wholly* modern. From the bowels of the twentieth century world was this personality thrown up to herald the age of science and machinery. He wants to harness new forces for the benefit of humanity. Next to the

Freedom of India the industrialisation of the country is his strongest passion. But he goes a step further. He advocates its socialisation with the same convincing analysis as Laski does in England. Nehru is a sworn enemy of capitalism. Openly and fearlessly he advocates the daylight murder of this ghost of modern times.

But Gandhi is the India of today as it exists. The life that he lives is the truest photograph of the life of India. The minutest details of present-day life of India are reflected in his personality. His frail body serves as a genuine background to depict the harrowing miseries of millions. His three-fourth nakedness portrays the shame of India's poverty. In his relentless struggle for freedom, the miserable masses fondly perceive the expression of their longings and the realisation of their aspirations. His philosophy is a scientific diagnosis of the wasting diseases that are eating into the vitals of India's withering body.

Gandhi expresses what India feels. He speaks what India thinks. He does what India desires to do. While Nehru plans for the India of tomorrow. He visualises what she would like to be. He is impatient to accomplish what India dreams to achieve.

Today both these men of India's destiny are restless to expunge the lethal disease of India's poverty. Their souls are eager to rescue India from the fatal strangulation of unemployment.

The prophetic mind of Gandhi says : Revive the village industries if you want to nurse back to

life the languishing millions of India. Nehru though an ardent champion of industrialisation lets his analytical mind probe into the implications of this step. He knows and has realised that so long as British Imperialism is entrenched in Indian soil, industrialisation will remain a moonshine, because Britain knows that the dawn of industrialisation in India will coincide with the night of her own economic doom. So to expect any plans for industrialisation to be given effect to by the present Government is like expecting a crop of rice in the desert of Rajputana.

But should Nehru sit still with folded hands and keep on sighing at his helplessness? Being a man of action, inertia has no chance to exist before the vitality of his life. Boldly he faces the question: "Is there no alternative to grapple with problem of India's grinding poverty?" The burning lamp of the All-India Village Industries shows him the way out of his dungeon of despair and darkness. The efficacy of the programme to revitalise the decadent life of villagers convinces him. The universality of its application calms his present fears.

As a temporary measure of relief during the period of transition he accepts the balm offered by the A.I.S.A., and rushes to apply it on the red gaping wound of India's destitution.

Nehru is not a mere theorist. He is a wide-awake realist. He knows that to industrialise the whole of India is a gigantic task requiring unlimited

finances. Even if India were free to have her own way and an exhaustive plan for its economic reconstruction were chalked out and given effect to, village industries would still play an important part in the economic life of India. *For a time India MUST live and work in her villages much longer than our economists imagine.*

Considering these facts, can anyone say that Nehru is wrong in compromising his "modernism" with Gandhi's so-called "medievalism?"

II

Now let us compare the attitude of Nehru to that of Gandhi with regard to non-violence.

With Gandhi non-violence is a creed. His belief in its efficacy is as deep and unshakeable as is his faith in the existence of God. With Nehru non-violence holds good merely as a policy. *It is just a political weapon and not a way of life.* It is just an instrument to achieve freedom and not a means to reach the goal of life.

Circumstances as they exist in India leave him with no other choice but to accept the doctrine of non-violence to wage war against British Imperialism. The first thing that our rulers accomplished in India was to disarm India and then exploit her to their heart's content.

The problem that perplexed Nehru was, how to wrest his lost freedom from the iron fist of John Bull. He had no arms to fight. So, was he to accept the doom of perpetual slavery, and let his mind fret and fume at his helplessness? Gandhi

offered him the "sword" of non-violence to fight for his rights. His piercing eyes discerned the wisdom of Gandhi's method and his scientific mind was convinced of its efficacy.

So, the Gandhi cap is not "a very bad fit" for a man with a modern brain. The cap only shows that the modern brain is not a mixture of abstract theories and valueless dogmas, but that it has the sense to realise and face facts as they are. It has the wisdom to bow to the exigencies of circumstances. It has the instinct to accept the inevitability of conditions as they exist. It has the courage to dovetail his "vision of the world" with the needs and demands of present-day India.

Nehru works for his new world which to him is a confederation of freedom-loving nations. But that dream will remain unrealised unless *India is free*. And that is why he works and strives for *Indian freedom first*. To expect a world federation to function without a free India as its active partner is like expecting a man whose legs are paralysed to do a hundred-yards sprint.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Gandhi's Inconsistencies

NOT being ashamed of his own ludicrous contradictions, Nichols has the barefacedness to accuse Gandhi in these words : " His (Gandhi's) mind is a jungle of contradictions and complexes in which the explorer is soon hopelessly lost."

It is true that Gandhi has a few contradictions attached to his political life and work in India. But he himself has admitted them without the slightest fear that the shadow of their shame would darken the effulgence of his reputation. The moment he realises that his former action was incorrect or his advice not proper, he, like an experienced general, retraces his steps and revises his plans.

Life is not something stationary and fixed like a rock. It is full of vitality. The will to act and the desire to express prompts it to march onwards and onwards. It flows like a stream. No stream has ever flowed eternally in the same bed that it made for itself when the first rush of water descended from the hill-top. The stream changes its course as the velocity and eagerness of the galloping tides changes. But these changes do not impair its

beauty, nor weaken its strength, nor influence its determination to fulfill its destined mission of fertilisation.

Emerson has said : " Foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." If a certain principle holds good under certain circumstances is it not absurd to deduce that it would be true for all times to come ? Man must adapt himself to the circumstances. As environments change, man has to adjust his rules of conduct. Imagine the pitiable condition of a man from Norway who, in order to *appear* consistent in his wearing clothes, decided to walk about in his fur coat in Jacobabad, in the blazing heat of the summer months !

If the author had cared to study the so-called inconsistencies of Gandhi, his " discerning " eyes would have seen consistency running through his seeming inconsistencies, just as, in nature, unity runs below diversity. I would go even a step further and say that, even if that were not true in Gandhi's life, what of it ? What is of paramount importance is that he was true to himself from moment to moment. Nothing is more unscientific, unstatesmanlike and even irreligious than to stick like a leech to a particular view when experience has proved its ineffectiveness.

Let us examine his latest inconsistency which shocked his followers for a good many days. Ever since 1919, Gandhi had been telling people that without Hindu-Muslim Unity there could be no *Swaraj*. But after the failure of the Cripps Mission,

he started giving the slogan that, as long as the Britishers are here, there can be no Hindu-Muslim Unity. And in order to achieve Unity, the knife that divided the two parts had to be thrown away. *Hence the cry : QUIT INDIA.*

Apparently this inconsistency seems vast in its magnitude and too conflicting to be reconciled and too fundamental to be explained. But that is not so. Here is the interpretation.

The goal of Gandhi's life is the freedom of India. The road that leads to the journey's end is Hindu-Muslim Unity. He exhorted his countrymen to build this straight path by sinking their differences and let the cemented blocks of mutual trust be paved on this road. He tried to build this road for 23 years but failed, because he realised that the Britishers in India kept on creating bigger and deeper differences. So he came to the inevitable conclusion that unless and until the Britishers were made to quit India, there could be no possibility of Unity. With their disappearance, disunity would disappear, and *Swaraj* would be in hand.

So we find that this inconsistency which baffled his followers was nothing else but a matter of emphasis. Today the emphasis is on QUIT INDIA and not on Unity, because the success of the QUIT INDIA *movement itself* will bring Unity. In other words by asking the Britishers to quit, we are working for Unity and in the achievement of Unity lies the realisation of *Swaraj*.

This may sound enigmatic to Nichols for his solution is, Divide and Quit. This formula of Nichols is nothing else but a trap for "his American friends."

The history of the British Rule in India shouts: "By dividing the communities the Britishers have been ruling India." If we try to fit in the solution of India—Divide and Quit—in the light of the above-mentioned experience, where do we reach? Britain shall hold India in bondage for ever.

If by dividing the communities Britain has been holding India in subjection for more than two hundred years, will not Britain, by dividing India, keep it under its iron heel for two thousand years?

And that is exactly what Nichols, the spokesman of Churchill and Co., desires.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Nichols Admits His Hypocrisy

TOWARDS the end of the chapter on Gandhi, which has been shown by facts and documented evidence to be overflowing with blatant lies, hideous misrepresentations and ungentlemanly insinuations, the author indulges in ludicrous wishful thinking. He poses as an oracle and says : "I myself think that his (Gandhi's) influence is sharply on the wane, and is not likely to re-assert itself even under the most favourable conditions."

Can clouds, however, thick and sombre ever overpower the dazzling brilliance of the sun by enshrouding its face? The British publicists have spared no effort to blockade the light of Gandhi by a heavy smoke barrage of propaganda. But their unholy mission has been as futile as that of the clouds which struggle with the rays of the sun in not letting them reach the earth. These passing clouds are of little consequence to light. Similarly propaganda soon realises its helplessness in suppressing Truth.

When in 1942, the attention of all the people, was focussed on Gandhi, and world opinion was

veering round to Indian Nationalism, cowardly Britain instead of arguing with him, clapped him in prison. By putting a cloak over his face, his opponents thought, that they would make the world forget his personality. By sealing his lips, England fondly believed that the voice of freedom had been hushed. But can a person prevent the steam from stealing out by placing a lid on the mouth of a boiling kettle ?

Can he ?

Since his release Gandhi has done nothing to re-assert his influence. First, it had never waned and secondly, he is the last person to thrust himself upon the people. In 1942, Gandhi had become a symbol of the Quit India Movement. Today, his countrymen have not only acclaimed him as their leader but made it abundantly clear that the symbol of 1942, is not only an urge of the heart but the goal of life as well. They are determined to reach that cherished goal. They are prepared to make every sacrifice in their arduous journey. Repression will not damp their spirits ; *lathis* will not cow them down ; bullets will not deter them. Once again they *will* DO OR DIE.

If Gandhi were a spent-up force, why should Lord Wavell have placed his name at the top of the list of the invitees to the Simla Conference. If Gandhi had become a non-entity why should Lord Wavell have interviewed him first ? Is it not a fact that the Viceroy spent much more time with Gandhi than with any other leader ? It is because Lord Wavell has not forgotten the words of his predecessor that Gandhi " is the biggest thing in India."

At Simla, I was told by foreign press correspondents that in spite of the British Government's scientific and sinister attempt to malign Gandhi, his influence had not gone down a bit in their countries. They further said that their papers and news agencies were frantically clamouring for an exclusive interview with him.

One morning I went to Manor Villa to see Gandhiji. The cold was simply biting and it was raining as if the angels had opened a water tap to empty the whole of their gigantic water reservoir. There I saw Preston Grover of *Associated Press of America* alighting from his rickshaw. He had to wait for a pretty long time before he could spend a few minutes with Gandhi. If Gandhi were no longer the double-column news story of American Press, a man like Grover would not have put himself to so much inconvenience to contact him.

II

Then the author says: "Every day that Gandhi has been in jail has been a rapid increase in the number of young Indians who either voluntarily or involuntarily are being brought into the orbit of the war effort which means into the orbit of the twentieth century."

Darling Nichols, what has gone wrong with you? Do you know what you have said? War effort *means* getting into the orbit of the twentieth century. And in the light of this new-fangled political (or perhaps satanical) philosophy, may I ask you to read your own words from page 10, *Cry Havoc*!

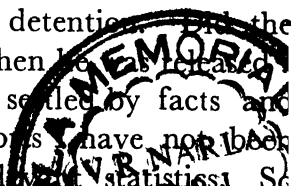
“ In the next world war I shall be a conscientious objector . . . I publicly proclaim my desire to be shot in the nearest backyard, within twenty-four hours of the declaration of war, rather than shoot, or gas, or drown, or otherwise murder any of my fellowmen. If a man makes that statement and means it, and if he makes it often enough, and if he is not entirely unknown by the public, it is presumed that he will either have to stand by it, when the hour comes, or else be denounced as such a hypocrite and a coward that life will be unendurable for him.”

Nichols, have you not instead of becoming a martyr, become an abettor of murder? Instead of your crying havoc, I cry havoc.

If you feel ashamed of your somersault, I sympathise with you. And if you retort : “ So what?”, I shall just say that the theory of Darwin about the descent of man is not only correct but in you a specimen of man’s forgotten ancestor is found, if not in shape at least in habits.

III

It is very difficult to say whether the increase in the recruitment—IF THERE HAS BEEN AT ALL—was due to Gandhi’s detention. Did the recruitment begin to dwindle when he was released? These controversies can only be settled by facts and figures. In spite of my best efforts I have not been able to lay my hands on the relevant statistics. So



any attempt to arrive at a conclusion is like trying to cook a dish without fire in the oven.

The author further observes that "In spite of the frenzied efforts of Congress to boycott it, the War Exhibition has been an unqualified success."

All what I can say is that the author is "talking through his hat." First, when the Exhibition was organised, the Congress was outlawed and there was hardly any Congressman left outside by the British Government. So how could the Congress ask the country to boycott it? Secondly, how could the Congress have boycotted it when Gandhi had laid down the principle that: "The Congress has no desire to surround ammunition factories or barracks and prevent people from doing what they like."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

England Fought For Idiots And Half-Wits

I SENT a letter to C. R. requesting him to throw light on the mist of mystery that the author enshrouds his interview with him. And here is his reply :

“ Your letter about Beverley Nichols’s book. The author had a talk with me at Madras. But he writes about my views not out of that interview but out of a criticism of my Lucknow address of 1940, issued by that unfair critic M. N. Roy. What he has said about me is therefore *very* second hand and not fair at all. There is no doubt the book is mischievous ”.

I met C. R. at Bombay and he repeated the same sentiments. The meanest thing that a journalist can do to a public man is to interview him first and if the views expressed by the leader do not fit in with his own scheme of things, is not to report the interview on the plea that he was requested to keep mum. And this is exactly what Nichols *has* done.

In his interview with Mrs. Naidu he keeps the reader ignorant regarding what she said about the August Resolution, and the innocence of the Congress in fomenting troubles. And the same dirty trick he plays in his interview with C. R. In order not to give publicity to his views, the author fabricates the excuse that he was not allowed to do so by C. R. himself.

The reader by this time must have become so used to the canards, lies, distortions and fabrications of Nichols that his latest ruse to suppress truth will not shock him much. The book is so full of shocks that if one were to take them all to heart, one would be soon suffering from Bright's Disease.

Any way, let us examine C. R.'s views as expressed and criticised by Nichols and his associate M. N. Roy. We are told that C. R. is a great admirer of Germany because in his address delivered in 1940 (which by the way Nichols says "in a *recent* speech", he praised "the scientific organisation of German Army." Well, what was wrong in admiring the German Army as a scientific organisation? Was it not so? The German Army as an organisation, so far as its efficiency as an army is concerned, was praised. But C. R. never applauded the ideology of the German Army. Have we not in India expressed our wonder at the scientific way in which British Imperialism works here, but at the same time condemned its very existence and worked for its annihilation?

If "the Germany of Kaiser and of Hitler has always been the beloved of the Indian nationa-

lists " why should C. R. have drafted the famous Poona Resolution of 1940 ? Why should C. R. have offered armed co-operation to Britain to meet the aggression of Germany, if that country were his darling ? These two things are so self-contradictory that to dilate on them any further is to insult the intelligence of the reader.

Further, we are told that " In contrast to this curious sympathy, Indian nationalism has never felt any sympathy for France, the land of great revolutionary traditions." This statement is as untrue as the saying of Hitler that the Allies declared war against peace-loving Germany, and that his nation was fighting in sheer self-defence.

Let the author look up the resolutions of the Congress and he will find them replete with sympathy for Britain and France in the same way as rose is full of fragrance. I could have filled pages with quotations from the speeches and writings of Congress leaders to show that their commiseration at the afflictions of Britain and France was as heartfelt and deep as it is between two brothers in trouble. Lest the author may retort that I am just indulging in a tall talk, I just take two extracts one from Gandhi " the dictator of the Fascist organisation " and the other from Patel " Gandhi's Greatest General."

On September 5, 1939, the Indian " Hitler " said: " My own sympathies are with England and France."

On September 13, 1939, the Indian "Himmler" said: "The sympathies of all Indian leaders are with Britain and France in the present war as they believe Nazism would lead to the extinction of the world."

II

Though it is beside the point under discussion, it is interesting to know what Nichols himself thought of the Germans as a nation. The Germans to him were superior to all the Continental people. Here is a passage from his book, *News of England*, page 90. And you must remember that this book was written and published in the year of 1938 when the Germans had started swallowing the little republics of Europe.

"The contrast that Germany presents with other countries is startling. Cross the frontier into Belgium and before you have travelled half an hour over the Belgian roads, you will have pulled up with a scream of brakes, to avoid some staggering figure. Cross the frontier into Poland and you will have to contend, not only with drunks, but with half-wits. That at least was my experience. Poland seems to possess the largest proportion of village idiots of any country in Europe. They emerge suddenly from hedges, and stand gibbering in the middle of the road, looking round for stones to throw at the windsrceen." And England went to war for the defence of "drunks" "half-wits" and "idiots"!

What would have been the course of world history if Chamberlain had before declaring war read

Nichols's views that Poland consisted of half-wits? He might have refused to declare war.

In *Cry Havoc*, on page 118, Nichols shows respect and admiration for Germans alone and for none else.

“ When I first walked into the hall of the League of Nations I saw so many unpleasant foreigners that I felt that Englishmen were, by comparison, gods. I saw Italians whose faces oozed grease, Japanese with such fixed and irritating smiles on their faces that I wanted to bash them, Frenchmen who smelt of *Violette de parme* and looked as though they had just come from a rather slippery orgy with pink and white mistresses, Spaniards of abominable arrogance, elbowing people about. The only people for whom I felt any *real* kinship were the Germans.”

The English are gods and since Nichols felt kinship with the Germans they, too were gods. The controversy as to who is the bigger god and who is the smaller god is irrelevant.

It will interest the reader to learn that though Nichols in *News of England* and *Cry Havoc* sang the songs of Germany, in his book, *The Fool Hath Said* spits at the entire population of Europe. On page 299 he gives his verdict that : “ Europe is merely inhabited by fools.”

Nichols seems to be changing colour as a guilty woman before her faithful husband. But why should not Nichols change colour like a woman? Though he is a man he definitely has some female glands working in his body. That gland must be active when in *Are They The Same At Home?* he moaned

on page 50 : “ Yellow hair is one of the charms which have been denied me. ”

Have you ever heard of a man grumbling for charms ? Men always long for tough bodies and sinewy muscles. But Nichols pines for charms and yellow hair !

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

I Met Gandhi and Patel

ONE of the pleasantest journeys that I ever had in my life was from Bombay to Poona. The uphill journey from Kalka to Simla in a train as compared to this journey is like getting into the Lahore Goal Bagh after a promenade in the Nishat Gardens of Kashmir.

The greenery of the low flat hills, with the rivulets meandering down, made me feel that this mountaineous area, vast and endless, was not just dead stones. There was life in giant limbs of the hills. There was soul in the beauty of the vegetation. It was not just the ephemeral life that is in the human body, but the permanent and indestructible life of which one thinks in the life beyond.

The dew which fell every morning on the leaves was not just water but like nectar gave ever-blossoming youth to the plants. The caverns which mutely lay in between the ridges did not give the impression that the hills had become old as do the limp hollow cheeks of a man of seventy. They were like the curves on the face of a marathon runner who is fit and full of vitality.

The frolic clouds which ringed the hills had a tantalising charm of their own. It looked as if dozens and dozens of light-coloured silken veils had all conspired to leave the beauties of Lahore and go to Poona for a sight-seeing expedition. Sometimes a cloud would linger for a while on the top of the hill. The hill seemed to blush like a newly-married bride and a cloud descended to cover her shyness.

I had taken *The Poet's Eye* to read on my way. But in spite of my best efforts I could hardly finish a poem. The vivid imagination of William Cooper as compared to the real and winsome panorama that lay before me, somewhat of gay embroidery, somewhat of elegant symmetry, suddenly became dull and obtruse. The soft warbling of the sanke-like creeping streams was more melodious than the music of his verses. The harmony of the trees and the bushes with the hills was far superior to the driving force of his thoughts that knitted his ideas into words.

Throughout the journey I was so gripped by the personality of Nature that nothing made or written by man interested me. The witty winds would come and drawl into my ears: "Be like unto us, gay and care-free." The rows of trees were a babel of tongues whose leaves sissilated their inner experiences, and the branches were beckoning with a benediction. And all over the forehead of hills was written in a mysterious alphabet the giant words: "We *are* the wisdom of the ages."

Before I could realise that the journey's end could be anywhere near, the *Deccan Queen* whisked into the plain and homely platform of Poona.

II

"Take me to the Nature Cure Clinic," I said to the Taxi driver. Hardly had the car run about a mile when I noticed the good old tricolour flag waving joyously over the top of a bungalow. My instinct told me that it was the shrine-cum-sanatorium of the *Mahatma*. My heart started beating a little faster as the car took a sharp turn into a bye-lane.

I left my tin of *Bachelors* in the car for it would have been nothing short of a sacrilege to smoke within the precincts of this "House of God." A churlish critic may damn this attitude as a piece of ludicrous hypocrisy, but the fact of respect for the *Mahatma* is so overpowering, that I could *never* dare to defile the chaste atmosphere of the bungalow.

As I started climbing the steps my legs became heavy like a bag full of iron. Just five steps to climb, and I felt as if I was taking the last five strides to reach the top of the Bakrota Hills. But metaphorically it was the summit of a mountain, for the floor on which the *Mahatma* squats is verily the summit for a man like me.

After a few "long deep breaths" I entered a drawing room which was furnished rather haphazardly with the type of furniture that one finds in off-the-track Canal Rest Houses in the Punjab.

The oddity of this guest room was perhaps purposely maintained to make the "cranks" (I mean no offence) that go to the hospital feel at home with the crazy looking chairs and curio like "sofas."

An old dumpy woman with a motherly smile playing on her face accosted me : "Are you a patient ?" As I replied in the negative she started glowering at me and I could read surprise in her coffee-coloured beady eyes. The reason being that I was suffering from a serious attack of bronchitis and was gasping for breath. The cough was so continuous that a man sitting in the next room would have believed that it was the gurgle of a pitcher full of water turned upside down.

She took pity on me and brought a glass of water to relieve my lungs caked with all sort of diseased stuff. I scribbled my name on a piece of paper and asked her to take it to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. Soon she arrived. As I introduced myself to her, she at once recognised me and said that she had been reading my books with great assiduity.

I gave her my latest book, *Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi*, and requested her to let me present it to the *Mahatma*. We had a little chat and a thought-provoking discussion on some points. Her grip on the Gandhian philosophy surprised me. She explained a few ticklish questions in that masterly manner which frankly speaking, evoked envy in my mind. She was a curious mixture of Mrs. Naidu and Mahadev Desai. The poetess's impetuous

alertness and the scholar's philosophic calmness had been mingled by nature into the personality of Rajkumari.

She took me to Gandhi's room. As I did not want to stay for long, lest I should pass on my cough to him, I hurriedly presented my book and made a burglarious exit. There was so much concentrated light around this Mickey Mouse of a man, that it dazzled my eyes and I hardly noticed how he was sitting and what he was nibbling. To me it seemed as if a piece of lightning had assumed human form and had come down to earth for some rest.

III

I asked Rajkumari to take a message to Sardar Patel that I wanted to see him for a few minutes. Unhesitatingly she did so. Immediately the Sardar appeared and escorted me to his room which was monastically simple. He himself lay on his bed and offered me a chair next to him.

For a while I felt pity for this man. His sinewy muscles which gave him the appearance of a Dhillon had all become languid. In his gait there was no longer a vitality like that of Prem Sehgal. He just dragged himself around instead of taking resolute strides like the stalwart Shah Nawaz.

Formerly when one pictured him all things connected with vigour, resistance and fight associated themselves with the man. But now all the things that one familiarises with a patient made

themselves evident in his wizened body. The grim shadows of senility hovered around his face.

The jail had turned this specimen of strength into a decrepit old man.

IV

I opened page 163 of *Verdict on India*, and asked him to read the following italicised words :

“ He (Patel) demanded that the British should hand over the power to ANY BODY—to the Muslim League, or to the Hindu Mahasabha, or even to criminals and dacoits. He would rather be ruled by the dacoits than by the British.”

SELF : Are these your words from a speech delivered by you at the A. I. C. C. Session held in August 1942 ?

PATEL : (with a smile that was child-like and bland) Oh yes. They are. What about them ?

SELF : Will you please explain as to why you preferred, or for that matter prefer, to be ruled by a dacoit who in the words of Beverley Nichols is “ the cut-throat, the strangler of little children, the sneak-thief, the raper of women in the dark.”

PATEL : You must at the outset bear in mind that when I use the word dacoit I mean the Indian dacoit. That I am sure is clear from the context itself. From my long experience I have come to the conclusion that it is easier and even certain to reform an Indian dacoit than to change the point of view of an average English

gentleman. Supposing the Britishers in deference to my wishes handed over the power to dacoits, it is true that the dacoits will play havoc in India in the beginning. But being Indians they will be inclined to listen to our arguments. Being the sons of the same soil they will appreciate the interests of the land. And take it from me, that within a few days they will become servants of India, and start working for the betterment of their brethren.

One thing more. Our *Rajahas* are supposed to be unbridled despots. I would tell the Britishers to hand over the power to these *Rajahas*. The same argument will apply in the case of our princes too. To-day these *Rajahas* do not feel that they are really Indian, because they *are* the creations and satellites of a foreign power. The moment the foreign power leaves the shores of India, our *Rajahas* to whom the Britishers have handed power to rule India, would immediately realise their Indian character. That very transformation will change their outlook and they will listen to our case. The so-called tyrants of to-day *will* become the reformers of to-morrow.

Let me repeat my words again and say that an Indian is an Indian after all, and an Indian dacoit is more amenable to understand our arguments than a foreigner though the latter be a perfect gentleman.

Are you satisfied with my explanation ?

SELF : Yes, I am.

PATEL : (with a low bass voice) Is there anything else you would like me to say ?

SELF : Thanks very much. You are not well, and I would hate to put you to any inconvenience.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Wake up Mr. Jinnah

IT is the irony of fate that every now and then stray political travellers from the West visit India and after a few months of wanderings in official quarters, start bragging about first-hand knowledge of the Indian affairs. Their egotism is not satisfied by just boasting of their "intensive study." It prompts them to pass their verdict. Imagine a peon after a year's employment in a court of justice climbing the chair of the Judge and giving his judgment !

Nichols was so much impressed by the personality of Jinnah, and so convinced by the force of his arguments and the logic of his demand that he left the Malabar Hills a staunch believer and an exponent of Pakistan.

Though it is of no importance, it is interesting to note that according to Jinnah's statement in which he extolled Nichols to the skies, Nichols had three interviews with him. But the author gives the impression that he met Jinnah only once.

Before we analyse the merits and demerits of the final solution of India's many ills as epitomised in the Patent Medicine called Pakistan, it is essential

to review the attitude and politics of the League for the last decade.

Uptil 1936, the proceedings of the Muslim League were immune from any censurous rebuke against the Congress. But after that we find that the League leaders let loose a tearing campaign of intemperate railing against the Nationalist leaders. The political prophets (or perhaps interested propagandists) were rudely shocked by the success the Congress achieved in the elections held in 1936 under the New Constitution. The popularity of the Congress made them jealous of its position ; the hold that it had on the masses upset their calculations ; the prospect of the Congress ruling India from the Ajanta Caves to the Khyber Pass made them realise that they were like the snarling dogs gnashing their teeth before the moving caravan.

Out of the eleven provinces, Congress secured an absolute majority in six. In the seventh the rival parties pledged their support to the Congress programme and a Ministry was formed there as well. The rebels of yesterday became the rulers of to-day ; the prisoners of Detention Camps sat in the Government Secretariats : the very traitors were administering Law and the saboteurs maintaining order.

Jinnah was cut to the quick. He found he was a nonentity in the political life of India. His egotism struck and flashed like the lightning across the heavy clouds of frustration that had

gathered around his political horizon. His anger exploded the clouds. His fury became the thunder and at last the black rain fell in 1937 in the form of the following words :

“ The present day leadership of the Congress especially during the last ten years has been responsible for alienating the Mussalmans of India more and more by pursuing a policy which is exclusively Hindu, and since they have formed the Governments in six provinces where they are in majority, they have by their words, deeds and programmes shown more that the Mussalmans cannot expect any justice or fair play at their hands. Where they are in a majority and wherever it suited them they refused to co-operate with the Muslim League parties, and demanded unconditional surrender and signing of their pledges.”

Out of 485 seats reserved for the Muslims in the New Constitution, the Muslim League captured 108 only. The representative character of the League will become more clear if we read the following analysis of Pro Abdul Majid Khan as given by him in the *Tribune*, dated Nov. 27, 1945 that “ in the 1937 elections, out of seventy-three lakh Muslim votes, the Muslim League could secure only about three lakhs. Besides the existing franchise is ridiculously limited and the Nationalist Muslims *who are an integral part of the Congress* can safely claim that they represent about ninety per cent of tshoe

Muslims who do not enjoy the right to vote at the moment.” (Italics ours).

Considering these facts and figures could the Muslim League claim to represent the masses? They did not enjoy the confidence of their electorate, hence it would have been betraying the spirit of democracy itself to let these men of the Muslim League govern the country.

Personally I am convinced that it would have been more tactful to rope in the Leaguists in the Ministries. If that had been done Jinnah would not have been in the position to collect these disgruntled people from all over the country and form a nucleus of his League which was defunct to all intents and purposes. And Jinnah himself would have dropped off for good, like a withered autumn leaf from the Tree of Indian Politics.

II

When the Congress Ministries resigned as a protest against the autocratic way in which India was dragged into the war, Jinnah's jubilation knew no bounds. He felt relieved that an era of unbridled tyranny had come to a premature end. He publicly expressed his enthusiasm by asking his followers to celebrate the occasion as a Day of Deliverance.

The grievances of the Muslim Community in the Congress governed provinces were formulated in what is called the Pirpur Report.

The author of the *Hindu-Muslim Question* on page 68 writes : “ There is a curious resemblance

between the grievances and demands of the Muslims against the Hindus in 1937-39 and those of the Christians and the Shia Muslims against the Sunni majority in Syria 1938-39."

To prove the utter falseness of the charges levelled against Congress Ministeries it would be only fair to Nichols himself to let those whom he regards as authorities and unbiassed observers to speak on this controversial subject. We shall summon Dr. Ambedkar, of whom Nichols is so fond, to give his evidence. On page 348 of *Pakistan*, the Dr. says :

"A perusal of these instances as given in the reports of the Muslim League Committees, leaves upon the reader the impression that although there may be some truth in the allegation, there is a great deal which is pure exaggeration."

And what did Sir Harry Haig the then Governor of the United Provinces say? It should be further borne in mind that it was in the United Provinces that the major portion of "atrocities" were committed. Sir Harry Haig at a meeting of East India Association presided over by Sir Hugh O'Neil the then Under-Secretary of State for India observed :

"In dealing with questions raising communal issues the Ministers in my judgment, normally acted with impartiality and a desire to do what was fair. Indeed, towards the end

of their term they were being seriously criticised by the Hindu Mahasabha on the ground that they were not being fair to the Hindus, though there was in fact no justification of such a charge. The Congress administration on its constructive side has been inspired by enthusiasm, imagination and a considerable degree of idealism. It has on the other hand, suffered from the defects of these qualities. There has been an impatience for quick results, the administrative machine was over driven, and decisions were sometimes hasty. But much has been achieved."

The London Times, which as we all know, is the microphone of the British Government wrote in a leader :

" Congress Ministeries in the provinces where the party was lately in power appear to have been well-disposed to the Muslim community."

Needless to say, the Congress and the British Government are always at loggerheads. And the British spokesmen's fingers are always itching to poke into the tender spots of the Congress body politic. But here a student of contemporary politics is confronted with unsolicited and staggering tributes by the opponents of the Congress.

If Nichols still remains unconvinced about the untruth of Jinnah's accusations, and that these charges were just figments of political imagination, I let Prof. Coupland knock the atrocity-phobia from the author's head. On page 189 of his book,

The Constitutional Problem of India, the learned Professor says that the incidents referred to by the League "were not very numerous considering the vast areas concerned ; many of them were of a relatively trivial character ; and similar incidents have been occurring from time to time for many years past."

Again on page 186 he writes :

"Repulsive details are recounted, repeated and italicised with the deliberate object, it would almost seem of infuriating any Muslim who might read them. Nor is it only Ministers or local Congress leaders who are charged with a policy of persecution. The administrative and judicial services are almost equally vilified."

Professor Coupland in his book, *The Cripps Mission*, observes :

"An impartial investigator would come, I think to the conclusion that many of these charges (by the League) were exaggerated or of little serious moment, that many of the incidents complained of were due to irresponsible members of the Congress party and that the case against the Congress Governments as deliberately pursuing an anti-Muslim policy was certainly not proved."

From every platform of the Congress an open challenge to Jinnah was thrown to substantiate the reality of these charges. The Congress President came forward with the proposal that Sir Maurice Gwyer, the then Chief Justice of the Federal Court of India, may be asked to investigate

and give his verdict. But Jinnah was not satisfied with an "ordinary" man like Sir Maurice Gawyer and pitched his demand as high as that of the appointment of a Royal Commission to hold a judicial enquiry. The Congress of course had no objection to appear before a Royal Commission, but Jinnah knowing that his sky scraper of grievances was built on slippery sands, quietly withdrew his demand.

Discretion certainly is the better part of valour.

III

Looking back on pre-war Europe we find that the Hitlerian technique of pressure politics was having a dazzling success. The stage-managed show of the Sudetens in Czechoslovakia was made to appear like a scene from the real-life drama of that country. The Nazi Fehurer time and again acclaimed that his moral duty was to protect the helpless German minorities in the neighbouring countries whose rights were being smothered ; whose institutions were being crushed and whose free thought was being strangled.

With the thunderous protestations of the Fehurer, war clouds seemed to gather round the erstwhile azure sky of Europe. The Pacifists having nothing else but an umbrella to protect themselves from the rain of bullets, threw their manhood into the British Channel and started playing the second fiddle to the Nazi Chief Superman. It is interest-

ing to note that our arch-anti-Fascist—the reader will of course guess Nichols—pleaded the case of Sudeten Germans in a such vehement way that Hitler must have felt small. Hitler's wish in those days was a command for the Britishers. Mr. Chamberlain rushed post-haste to Munich and drank deep of the cup of humiliation. What he thought was a toast to the peace of Europe was in reality a dirge sung to the funeral of the Continent.

The unique success of the Nazi technique of grievance-politics served as an eye-opener to puny Hitlers all over the world. As to how much influence these gangster methods had on Jinnah, I let Dr. Ambedkar judge and speak :

“ The Muslims are now speaking the language of Hitler claiming the place in the sun which Hitler has been claiming for Germany. For their demand for 50 per cent. is nothing but a counter-part of the German claims for *Delltschland Uber Alles* and *Lebensraum* for themselves irrespective of what happens to other minorities.”

If we examine the speeches of Jinnah during the year of 1938, we find that the evil of bolstering up grievances, emanated for him from the German Foreign Office. It was from his Nazi teachers he learnt that the road to power politics is paved with grievance-politics. The fact becomes as obvious as plack-print on a white paper if we read the following quotation from his speech reproduced in *Indian Annual Register* 1938, page 354.

“ It was because the Sudeten Germans were forced under the heel of the majority of Czechoslovakia who oppressed them, suppressed them, maltreated them and showed a brutal and callous disregard for their rights and interests for two decades, that the Republic of Czechoslovakia is now broken up and a new map will have to be drawn. Just as the Sudeten Germans were not defenceless and survived the oppression and persecution for two decades, so also the Mussalmans are not defenceless and cannot give up their national entity and aspirations.”

Commenting on the influence of the Home Front of the Sudeten German Party as organised by Conrad Henlein, Mr. Beni Prashad in his book *The Hindu-Muslim Question* says :

“ The progress of the Sudeten demands from a large share in the administration and policy to a repudiation of minority status, the claim to separate nationhood, the denial of Czechoslovak unity, charges of atrocities and oppression unsupported by evidence, the demand for frontier revision, the advocacy of a virtual partition together with the claim of 50 per cent share in the residual central organisation—all these features in the Sudeten movement in 1936—38, found their counterpart in the resolutions of the Muslim League in 1939—42. In fact, some of the phrases employed are identical.”

And what was the attitude of the Congress towards the unhappy Republic of Czechoslovakia ? It passed resolution after resolution condemning the

brutality of Hitler in swallowing alive the strong and healthy body of the finest Republic in Europe. The Congress outspokenly dissociated itself from the British connivance and protested against her abetment. The Congress leaders mercilessly criticised the men of Downing Street for having signed the death-warrant of Czechoslovakia.

But Jinnah to grind his own axe aligned himself with Hitler. Time the relentless Judge of human actions has given its verdict. The Pen of Truth dipped with the Ink of Right has redrawn the boundaries of Czechoslovakia on the map of Europe. Hitler the God-Father of minorities is dead and gone. Conard Henlein, the champion of the Sudeten Germans awaits trial before the Tribunal of International Morality. Modern India will not be surprised if Jinnah one day shall have to stand in the dock with nothing but his own lies to defend him.

IV

To evaluate personalities and events in their true perspective, the historian has to dig facts from the grave of forgotten episodes. It is his thankless job to exhume the petrified March of Events and place it before the living present to judge personalities and trace the gradual development of their thoughts.

In the good old palmy days, Jinnah was proudly called the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity. Through sheer force of work, backed by the sincerity of purpose, he had evolved his personality into a symbol of unity. But to-day, through

his policy of negation, backed by a reactionary outlook on life, he has converted himself into an Ambassador of His Majesty's Unity. The former role he played in the Lucknow Pact of 1916. And the latter role he played in the Lahore Resolution of 1940.

Every time that Hitler pounced upon his neighbours, he would calm the angry world by swearing "this is my last territorial demand." The world would take him at his words and heave a sigh of relief, little knowing that the vulture with its eyes blue as death would shriek again from Berchtesgaden.

All the Muslim demands as formulated by them in a concrete shape were conceded in the Lucknow Pact. It was joyously presumed by the leaders of Nationalist India that the corner stone of United India having been laid by the Lucknow Pact, the whole of India would stand like a rock and resist the pincer movements of Divide and Rule. But that was not to be. The glory of the Pact proved to be but a nine days' wonder.

Later on Jinnah formulated his fifteen points mistakenly known as the Fourteen Points. A barrage of opposition was let loose against them from every corner. Hindus, Sikhs and even the Simon Commission was opposed to the latest demand of Jinnah. But believe it or not, each one of them had been granted by 1935 when the New Reforms came into force.

In spite of this concession, Jinnah kept on grumbling and spitting words of fire as

his idols in Berlin and Rome were doing. In 1938 when Nehru had gone to the Malabar Hills to negotiate with Jinnah, the latter to the amazement of all, like a conjuror produced another rabbit—his Fourteen Points. And further around the neck of this rabbit his adroit hands put the small collar of “50 per cent share in everything.”

If a Hindu like me were to criticise this unmanageable attitude of Jinnah, the temperature of Nichols would shoot up as if a thermometer had been placed in a tea cup and he would get a fit of delirium and start saying: “Take away this Hindu from me who is as treacherous as a cat left in the cupboard, otherwise my agitated brains will burst.” So I let his favourite Dr. Ambedkar speak. On Page 255 of *Pakistan* he observes:

“It will thus be seen that every time a proposal for the reform of the constitution comes forth, the Muslims are there ready with some new political demand or demands . . . the more the Muslims demand, the more accomodating the British seem to become. At any rate, past experienceshows that the British have been inclined to give the Muslims more than what the Muslims themselves had asked for.”

But, in spite of Jinnah's intransigence, the Congress leaders kept on wooing him. All possible ways and means were explored to arrive at a workable agreement. Unfortunately the more keenness the Congress showed to come to terms with

Jinnah, the stiffer became his giraffish neck. With the outbreak of the war, negotiations were interrupted. And the changing circumstances wrung down the curtain of interval.

Although, as observed earlier, the Viceroy of India had in a Czarist way tagged India to the chariot wheel of Britain's war against Germany, he was nonetheless anxious to pool the moral support of the Indian leaders. Post-haste Gandhi was summoned to climb the Simla Hills. Jinnah was made to stand in a queue next to Gandhi. This extraordinary privilege amazed him and he candidly confessed it in his Presidential Address to the Muslim League Session in 1940.

“But after the war was declared the Viceroy naturally wanted help from the League. Suddenly there came change in the attitude of the Viceroy towards me. I was treated on the same basis as Mr. Gandhi. This was the severest blow to the Congress High Command. I was wonder struck why all of a sudden I was PROMOTED and given a place side by side with Mr. Gandhi.”

Again he said :

“It will be remembered that upto the time of the declaration of war, the Viceroy never thought of me, but of Gandhi and Gandhi alone. *But now I suddenly realised that I was the sole representative of the entire Muslim population of India.*” (Italics ours).

In the earlier days Lord Birkenhead had enjoined upon Sir John Simon to leave “Jinnah high

and dry," but the war created new situations, and unexpected developments compelled the British Government to stage a *volte-face*.

Mr. Edward Thompson in his book, *Enlist India For Freedom*, observes :

"The Muslim League has gained in the same fashion as Congress since it became the Government practice to treat its President Mr. Jinnah as a kind of Muslim Mahatma."

Jinnah now thought that he was no longer just one of the top-leaders, but he was in fact the equal of Gandhi himself. Being so big, he had to talk big. If Gandhi put forward his claim that he represented the masses of India, Jinnah too had to say : "I am the sole representative of the Muslims of India." If Gandhi demanded the freedom of India, Jinnah had to shout for "Pakistan in the Muslim majority provinces." If Gandhi said that he must see India free in his life time Jinnah too had to come forward with a parallel wish : "We will realise our goal earlier than anticipated and there will be no greater happiness to me than to see Pakistan established during my life." If the Congress had passed its resolution at Lahore in 1929 demanding for the first time complete Independence for India, Jinnah too had to choose Lahore to demand Pakistan for his Muslim India.

The Muslim Mahatma was at pains to polish his halo which the British Government had carved around his head. Being no longer an ordinary mortal because his pilgrimage to Simla had turned

him into a twentieth century Israel, he was bound in conformity with his dignity to soar high above the ambitions of his ordinary Muslim brethren.

When on August 8, 1942, Gandhi was hermetically (politically) sealed in the Aga Khan Palace, a supreme opportunity came in the way of Jinnah. Looking back a student of contemporary politics concludes that Gandhi's difficulty was Jinnah's opportunity. A journalist like Edgar Snow whose knowledge of current affairs evokes envy in the heart of an aspirant journalist wrote in his book *Glory and Bondage* :

“ The wind which blew Gandhi ill, had been slowly blowing good to his chief political opponent Mohammed Ali Jinnah. The Qaid-e-Azam, the Grand Moghul of the Muslim League had apparently put his bets on the right horse. By taking up a nominal pro-Ally stand and staying out of rebellion, the Musalman Leader had kept his freedom to talk. And he had made exceedingly good use of it by blanketing India with propaganda for his pet scheme of Pakistan. *He based this claim on the fact that the Muslims wanted it and he being their sole representative was just echoing their demand. Mr. Amery of course helped Jinnah to establish his representative character because it served Amery's purpose to convince the world that the Congress was just a party and not the organ of the whole of India.*”

(Italics ours).

V

Uptil 1940 Jinnah always referred to the Muslims as a minority in number and a well-knit community in strength. But the war revolutionised his character and outlook. The war-time Jinnah was no longer the worn-out pre-war Jinnah. He was now a Muslim Mahatma, his qualification and status having been recognised by the British Government. So how could his Muslims remain just a minority? Their socio-political status had to be raised. Overnight the Muslims emerged as a full-fledged nation with all the historic traditions, cultural qualifications and political background of any other nation in the world. Jinnah himself till lately spurned the very idea of Muslims being a separate nation, but now barefacedly he swallowed his own words. One turns over the pages of history in vain to trace a parallel of this political somersault.

The Muslims themselves never dreamt of being a race entirely different from the Hindu brethren. But just as Hitler gambled to be the leader of Europe so Jinnah too was dreaming luxuriantly of wearing the crown of an Independent State with the regal mace of Pan-Islamism in his hands. To achieve this end he had to tell the Muslims: "You are no longer the under dogs of Indian Society. You are a separate nation, hence you deserve a homeland and a state."

Hitler was encouraged in his ambition by the British ruling classes as they wanted him to wage

their war against Communist Russia. Similarly, Britain kept on patting Jinnah on the back as he fights her war against the Congress and the resultant differences and complexities thus created compel their reluctant hands to perpetuate their hold on India. The gullible world is mesmerised into a belief that if Britain withdraws from India, the two nations entrenched in warring camps would fly at each other's throat. There would be civil war and anarchy in India and her land would be a pool of blood.

The system of separate electorates which was granted by the Montagu-Chemsford Reforms proved a double edged weapon in its working. It certainly gave representation to the Muslims, but so long as their legislators made religion the sole basis of their politics they could never come into power. In a democratic country like England, a minority in the House of Commons may become a majority and form a Government if its programme appeals to the country. But as Islam in danger was the beginning and the end of the Muslim League politics, the Leaguers had to be back-benchers always. So the demand and formation of a separate State was the only way to satisfy Jinnah's ambition to be a ruler, unmindful of the deleterious effect it would have on the prosperity of India.

This reactionary and chimerical demand of Jinnah at the League Session held in Lahore in 1940, created confusion and despondency in political circles. He repeated his anti-national and retrograde

theory of Hindu India and Muslim India. He innovated the idea that the misconception of one Indian nation was the springboard of most of India's present day maladies and that it would lead to the destruction of the country. He further laid down that Muslim India would not accept a constitution which would result in a Hindu majority Government. In fact, Jinnah demanded the division of India into regional zones, independent of any central authority.

It is interesting to recall Jinnah's sentiments, as expressed in his presidential address to the Muslim League at Lucknow in 1916. He said : "Were democratic institutions unknown to the Hindus and Mohammadans in the past ? Was there no village *panchayat* ? What are the history, the tradition and the literature and the precepts of Islam ? There are no people in the world who are more democratic even in their religion than the Mohammadans." This was how he disposed off the argument that democracy was unsuited to India.

As regards the Muslims being a separate nation, he rightly said : " Amidst the clash of warring interests and the noise of foolish catch-words, no cool headed student of Indian affairs can lose sight of the great obvious truism that India is the first and the last resort of Indians."

His liberalism in politics and catholicity in every day social life is clear from this injunction :

" Let us remember whether Hindus or Muslims, that new India wants a wholly differ-

ent type of public worker of more generous spirit and ampler mould, free from egotism of sect and narrowness of bigotry, who can rise above the petty pre-occupations of the day to a higher plane of devotion and service, which alone can give to a people faith hope, freedom and power . . . India cannot remain under the heel of a novel form of bureaucracy for all time to come, when Japan and even China have set up constitutional Governments on the democratic lines of Great Britain and America."

Jinnah was an idealist and a realist at the same time in those good old days. But to-day his vision is blurred, his heart has become selfish and his outlook on life distorted. Instead of working together, feeling together, subordinating all sectarian and racial interests to the larger hope and the brighter vision of unity, he wants to divide our compact Indian life into two water-tight compartments.

Jinnah was in no sense a religionist as he to-day *poses* to be, and is always at pains to make the people believe that Islam is the breath of his life, and the tenets of *Quran* the very food for his soul. He himself admitted this as is clear from the foregoing quotation. Dr Ambedkar in his book, *Pakistan*, expresses the same view :

"Mr. Jinnah was never known to be a very devout, pious or a professing Muslim. Besides kissing the *Holy Quran* as and when he was sworn in as an M. L. A. he does not

appear to have bothered about its contents or its special tenets. It is doubtful if he frequented any mosque either out of curiosity or religious fervour. To-day one finds a complete change in Jinnah."

Examining this antediluvian demand of the unholy vivisection of India, we are irresistibly drawn to the sad conclusion cold and naked as the steel sword—that India politically and economically would become at least impotent if not defunct. The tragedy of India will be as real and complete as that of a car which is stationary even though its engine noisily runs on. The history of Europe after the Treaty of Versailles, and the happenings of the II World War are eloquent proof that to create territories with populations on a racial basis is to sow the seeds of conflict and distrust.

All modern political experience is vehemently in favour of federation and centralisation. But our Jinnah is still living in medieval times when every group with any kind of sponsored unity wanted to live in segregation from the rest. Not only this. He wants what Moghul Emperors with all their might to enforce their will did not think of and of what even a bigoted and racially prejudiced fanatic like Aurengzeb did not dream. When all the world plans aim at further and greater unity of States and the peoples to safeguard the integrity of their existence, it is strange and equally painful to find Jinnah preparing his mad plan to Balka-

nise India, despite its obvious perils and potential mischief.

The gruesome tragedy of the last war has convinced every sane man that the policy of isolationism abounds with suicidal pitfalls that jealously gape for their victims. But the tragedy of modern India is that in the self-deceptive name of finding a solution for communal problems, the fatal policy of isolationism is being invited and enacted. The heads of the Muslim League refuse to heed the plaintive cries from Warsaw and Luxemburg. They shut their eyes and see not the sign post of caution that the Balkan states frantically hold for the benefit of the world.

VI

It would be no exaggeration to say that the present stalemate and stagnation in the national struggle, is caused by the obstructionist and disintegrating tactics of the Muslim League's present leadership. The League a galaxy of knights, landlords ex-Executive Councillors, is rapidly moving in the direction of close collaboration with the Imperialism.

To substantiate the truth of these charges we let Sir Stafford Cripps speak. On May 3, 1940, he wrote in his paper *The London Tribune* :

“ We must ask ourselves whether 250 millions of Hindus are to be denied self-Government in United India because 80 millions of Muslims are afraid of it, and put forward an impracticable suggestion for the

division of India in order to prevent the Indian peasants and workers from obtaining control of their country. The truth is that if the 80 millions of Muslims were left to make their own political decisions without any injection of communal animosity, the great majority of them would support the Congress Party's programme. In fact, many of them do to-day. Actually the President of the Congress is himself a Muslim and there are many Muslim organisations which oppose the Muslim League and support the Congress in its demands. The attitude that is being adopted to-day by the British Government is that they can and will do nothing further until the Hindus and the Muslims settle their differences. This gives the reactionary leaders of the Muslim League the power to prevent the people of India getting self-government almost indefinitely. This is a dog-in-the-manger attitude which does not deserve support. In effect, the Muslim League leaders say : 'If we cannot rule the Indian masses as we used to, then we will see to it that they are governed by the British, who have always given us a preferential position in India in proportion to our numbers, because that is far better for our own interest than if the Indian masses are allowed to govern themselves. If that were to happen then we should lose our privileges and our class position would be jeopardised.' It is this attitude of the British Government that is encouraging them

whether consciously or unconsciously. I believe that once India is self-governing the lines of political cleavage will tend to become those of class and not of religion."

If someone were told that it was a quotation from Nehru's speech he would believe it. But Cripps somersault in 1942, when he brought the Draft Declaration was but in conformity with his mental make up. The Cripps Conference was just like a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Council of British Labour at Brighton or Hasting, where the firebrand Cripps was made to swallow his own words that he hastily uttered against the Buckingham Palace, the King and Capitalism. And when the Conference ended, the good old Cripps emerged a pink socialist of the type Transport House takes pride in. He will go down in history as an extremist after the type of Bradlaugh and Keir Hardie, but a reactionary like Amery in a moment of crisis when an occasion of translating one's pretensions into practice arises. The heart of Labour Leaders is always in the East End but their bodies live and prosper in the Court Circle.

Being a staunch believer in the unity of India, Cripps offered a knife to the League to carve the body of India.

VII

Now considering the ratio of population in Pakistan we find it will be 2 to 3. Thirty-eight million Hindus and four million Sikhs will form the

minority. Will Pakistan remain a Pakistan with 42 % of infidels ? Will not a minority of 42 per cent. pool its resources to guard its interests against the so-called majority ? While the Hindus will be in a position to hold their own, the 20 million Muslims against 152 million Hindus will be helpless.

The authors of the book, *The Communal Triangle in India*, discuss the position of Hindus in the Muslim-majority provinces in these words :

“ In the Muslim zones capital is concentrated mostly with the Hindus. The Hindus of North-West Frontier Province, for instance, contribute 80 per cent. of the income-Tax. In Bengal nearly three-fourths of the revenue comes from them, while approximately 87 per cent. of the legal, 80 per cent. of the medical and 83 per cent. of the Banking, Insurance and Exchange business is in Hindu hands. The predominance of Hindus in the major cities of the proposed state of Pakistan has its own significance.”

As a foot-note to this passage they add :

“ The percentage of non-Muslim population is 70·8 in Hyderabad (Sind), 53·1 in Karachi, 60·1 in Sukkur 66·7 in Bannu and 45 in Dera Ismail Khan.”

Commenting on this Mr. Kulkarni the author of, *Is Pakistan Necessary?* observes :

“ Thus the wealth and the consequent all-round progress of the Hindus have won for them a pre-eminent place in the Muslim-majority provinces. Will not injury done to their interests, harm the Muslims as well? We can easily foresee that the spirit of mutual understanding and toleration which now governs the relations between the various communities living in the Muslim-majority Provinces will cease to exist, should Pakistan become a *fait accompli*. Notwithstanding the assurances of Mr. Jinnah to the Hindus and the Sikhs, it is no use disguising the fact that Pakistan will be governed according to the dictates of religion. In a state where the system of governance is based upon religion, mere enterprise and ability are hardly calculated to be the hall-marks of preferment and promotion. Eligibility will be according to religious labels, and those who do not possess them must nurse their talent and disappointment together in secret.”

As both Nichols and his giant Jinnah recommend Dr. Ambedkar's book *Pakistan*, it is but fair to quote from this very book. The learned Doctor observes :

“ Pakistan is unnecessary to Muslims where they are in a majority because there is no fear of Hindu Raj. It is worse than useless to Muslims where they are in a minority, because Pakistan or no Pakistan,

they will have to face a Hindu Raj. Can politics be more futile than the politics of the Muslim League ? The Muslim League started to help minority Muslims and has ended by espousing the cause of majority Muslims. What a perversion of the original aim of the Muslim League ! What a fall from the sublime to the ridiculous ! Partition as a remedy against Hindu Raj is worse than useless."

VIII

One naturally wonders as to why and how the League leaders have taken one third of a century to discover their separate national existence. Their original demand began with separate electorates, and under Jinnah's fostering care developed into Fourteen Points. And then into another set of points. Subsequently it transpired that the points were too numerous for calculation, and could be covered only by the demand for a separate National State. It was categorically stated by Jinnah that since the religion of the Muslims was different from the Hindus any attempt to merge them together into a single nation was not practical. They in fact were two nations.

Looking beyond the frontiers of India we find that men belonging to different religions have grouped themselves into a single nation. If that were not so Catholics and Protestants in Britain would have existed as separate nations or for that matter Normans and Saxons could not have merged them-

selves into the present British nation. Moreover, the heroes of Scotland are not the same as those of England and “very often the hero of (Hindus) is the foe of the other (Muslims) and likewise their victories and defeats overlap”—Jinnah’s words—but that fact has not prevented the English and the Scotch from fusing into the British Nation or forming a single united well-knit nation.

In countries like China, Japan, and Russia there are Muslims but they are all an integral part of their respective nations. A Buddhist in China for example is as much a Chinese as is a Muslim.

Take any country in the world and one finds that it nowhere has a homogeneous population. In Poland there are only 69 per cent Poles, while the rest of the population consists of Ukrainians, White Russians, Germans, Lithuanians and so on. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Hungary were never a composite State. In Canada the French fought with the English with the same pugnacity as a dog fights a cat. In South Africa, the English fought the Boers to the bitterest end. But ultimately they realised that the way to perdition lies through mutual strife. In Canada there was no cry for Frankistan and Englistan. In South Africa, General Botha never issued “Boeristan” as the Order of the Day.

Sooner rather than later the warring communities of Canada and South Africa realised that racial and religious diversities are no bar to harmonious and creative living. Overnight they threw the filth

of antagonism into the gutter of hatred from which it sprang. They clasped one another's hand in life-long friendship for the ultimate good of their own common life.

Ireland was bifurcated because the British wanted to weaken the country. The ulcer of Ulster was brought into being because it would damage the body of Ireland. The plea given by the British was that there existed irreconcilable cleavages between the Catholics and Protestants. But Terence MacSwiney repudiates the prevalence of such differences. In *Principles of Freedom*, he says :

“In Ireland there is no religious dissension, but there is religious insincerity. English politicians to serve the end of dividing Ireland, have worked on the religious feelings of the North, suggesting the danger of Catholic ascendancy. There is not now, and there never was, any such danger, but our enemies by raising the cry, sowed discord in the North, with the aim of destroying Irish unity. It should be borne in mind that when the Republican Standard was first raised in the field in Ireland, in the Rising of 1798, Catholics and Protestants in the North were united in the cause. Belfast was the first home of Republicanism in Ireland. This is the truth of the matter. The present-day cleavage is an unnatural thing created by Ireland's enemies to hold her in subjection and will disappear entirely with political freedom.”

IX

Jinnah further says : “ Muslims are a nation according to any definition of a nation and that they must have their homeland and their territory and their state.” Well, so far as the definition of a nation is concerned there are as many definitions as there are political thinkers. Every group can be turned into a nation according to some definitions, and the most qualified of a living nation can be shown not to satisfy the conditions of nationhood according to the other definitions. Examining the precept of Jinnah that the Muslims are a nation because their religion is common, we find that the members of the same religion belong to different nations. The common religion of the Egyptians, the Turks, the Arabs, the Persians and the Afghans has not welded them into one nation. Similar is the case with the Christians, French, English, Americans, Italians, who are all Christians but full-blooded different nationalities.

Mr. Kulkarni keeping these facts in view observes in his book, *Is Pakistan Necessary ?* :

“ Religion is essentially a matter between an individual and his Maker, and in India, thanks to the proselytizing zeal of the missionaries, men change their faiths with an ease which economic necessity and ignorance alone can make possible. So, if we accept the League’s definition of a ‘ nation ’ taking religion as the only criterion, a man can change his nationality as often as his caprice

dictates, thus putting even Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde to shame ! But nationality is not such a facile thing to be discarded at will like an unwanted garb. It is the permanent stamp of a people, demarcating them from the rest of mankind. It is a misnomer to speak of Hindu and Muslim nationality. There is one nationality for both and it is neither alterable nor interchangeable, no matter how many times an Indian may change his faith and in whichever part of the world he may reside."

It is true that the Hindus and Muslims today do not see eye to eye in all things. But a little peep into the working of human nature, as it has expressed itself, since Adam ate the forbidden fruit, shows the crystal clear tendency in human nature that when friends or members of a family are living together, the sharp little ears of the chronicler neither records nor hears the soft soothing music of harmony. But if friends separate or the members of a family start quarreling the gossipping neighbours like the sensitive seismograph begin to register the "old" differences that were there and working like the subterranean tremors to shake the structure of friendship and unity. The written and the unwritten pages of trust, goodwill and tolerance are forgotten but the prejudices though of the smallest consequence are magnified. The bigoted and interested leaders make an encyclopædia of the minor items of diversity and keep on quoting from them to build their perverse thesis.

When we look at the Pakistanic States as visualised and dreamt of by Jinnah we find that they are bound to contain a fair minority of Hindus and other communities, and it is Jinnah who has laid down the principle that "to yoke together two such nations under a single State, one on a numerical minority and the other as majority must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the Government of such a State."

According to the latest census reports the population of India is 383 million. The Muslims are 92 millions or 24 per cent. As Jinnah is not interested in the fate of the Muslims in the States, the population of the Indian States should be excluded. The population of British India drops to 295 millions out of which 79 millions or 27 per cent are Muslims.

Nichols says : "Jinnah's 100 million Muslims will march to the left, to the right, to the front to the rear at his bidding, and at no body's else's." A political liar like Nichols has no love for truth or accuracy. Mr. Jinnah's so called 79 million followers are shot up to 100 million. But this is by the way.

Analysing further we find that even if the five provinces as they are demarcated and constituted form themselves into Pakistan, 20 million Muslims will be left in Hindustan to be "tyrannised" and oppressed by the infidels. Jinnah's argument for Pakistan is to break the Hindu yoke that hangs around the Muslim neck. But if the 110 million

Hindus of British India can let loose murder on the 79 million Muslims in spite of the sincerest desire on the part of the British to protect their "favoured wife" what will happen to the 20 million Muslims before 190 million strong organised Hindus?

Will Jinnah be indifferent to their fate? If he does he will be as despicable a traitor as Laval was to France. Will he issue an edict "Muslims in Hindustan should migrate into the Land of the Pure?" Will the Muslims of the other provinces care to migrate to Pakistanic Provinces with whose language and customs they are as unfamiliar as Nichols is from his Christian brother in Ukraine. Even if the Muslims decide to migrate, it will take more than a quarter of a century to accomplish this fantastic project of mass immigration.

Thirdly, will Jinnah hold the Hindus in the Pakistan as hostages to ensure the well-being of the Muslims in the Hindustan? In the words of Prof. Coupland "It is a crude idea, a negation of civilised Government." This proposition means a reversion to the barbaric age. Its fulfillment will put back the hands of the Clock of Progress.

Not only will there be members of different religions in Pakistan, but the two warring sects of Shiah's and Sunnis which are a part of Islam will be there. How will Jinnah accommodate them? How will he allot them a separate *niche* in his proposed mansion? Jinnah must face these facts as a wide-awake realist, and not just keep on harping on the differences between Hindus and Muslims.

Proceeding further we find that the Muslims claim that their political importance cannot merely be proportionate to their numbers because they were ruling the country before the advent of the British. But the historical fact is that the Muslim Kings and Emperors had ceased to rule by the time the British arrived and the latter wrested dominion from the Hindu Maharathas, Sikhs, and the Rajputs, who were in reality ruling India at that time.

Besides 90 per cent of present day Indian Muslims are the direct descendents of Hindu converts to Islam. Even Jinnah is a Khojah, still governed by Hindu Law. The Muslims who conquered India were the Muslim Afghans, the Muslim Turks, and the Muslim Persians, and not the ancestors of the Indian Mussalmans who represent those Hindus who cowardly succumbed to the conquest. While the present day Hindus are those who survived and bravely resisted the tortures and temptations. By embracing the religion of the conqueror the vanquished *cannot* claim the credit of the conquest or the superior martial virtues of the invaders. The claim that Muslims ruled India is as true and ridiculous as the claim which our Indian Christians may put forward centuries hence after the British Christians have left India that Christians once ruled the land, and that therefore they are entitled to privileged treatment on that account !

X

When all is said and done, the real valuation of India and the real appraisal of India, of her

achievements of centuries, will be just this, that her history, although made of such varied and conflicting elements, nonetheless has produced a common Indian culture. Indian culture was not borne of quarrels out of anything that meant disharmony or isolation, out of vulgar frictions of political conflicts but of the common heritage of both Muslims and Hindus. Culture could not be born in a day by the passing of a resolution, but it was the work of a time spirit, toiling through centuries and focussing together human sympathies. Thus after centuries of coalescing together it is impossible for any one to undo that twisted knot that has been twirled together.

Geographically India is a vast country, but its vastness does not obscure its oneness. India is a land of diversity of languages but its diversity does not cancel its unity. India is a land of fanatic religionists but their bellicose fanaticism does not disturb the silent harmony of the masses who offer up prayers which proclaim it and go on pilgrimages which assume it.

Behind and within the unity of humanity, there is a stratification of man, which is to the full, as interesting as the tale of the formation of the sedimentary rocks. Race over race, civilisation over civilisation, epoch upon epoch, the molten tides of immigration have flowed, tended to coningle, and finally superposed themselves. And systems of thought and manners have grown, by the accreting of the burdens of one wave to those of another, and their blending into a whole, under the action of the genius of place. Behind ancient

Egypt, how long an historical spelling-out of elements there must have been ! What a protracted process of adding race-syllable to race-syllable took place, before that brilliant complexus first emerged upon the human mind ! Yet there was such a being as an Ancient-Egyptian, recognisable as a specific human unit, in contradistinction to his contemporary Phoenician, Cretan, or Babylonian. Or the same possibility may be seen in our own day in the fact that there is such a being as a modern-American, diverse in his origins, beyond and type, that has ever heretofore appeared, and yet marked by certain common characteristics which distinguish him, in all his sub-divisions, from the English, Russian, Italian, who contributed to form him.

These miracles of human unification are the work of place. Man only begins by making his home. His home ends by re-making him. Amongst all the circumstances that go to create that heritage which is to be the opportunity of a people, there is none so determining, so welding, so shaping in its influence, as the factory of the land to which their children shall be native. Spiritually, man is the son of God, but materially he is the nursling of Earth. Not without reason do we call ourselves children of the soil. The Nile was the Mother of the Egyptian. The shores of the Mediterranean made the Phonician what he was. The Babylonian was the product of river-plain and delta, and the Indian is literally the son of Mother Ganges.

In every case, however, this unity induced by place is multiplied, as it were, by the potentialities of confluent race-elements. Man learns from man. It is only with infinite difficulty, by striving to re-apply our powers in terms of the higher ideals, of some new circle to which we have been admitted, that we raise the deeds of the future above the attainment of the past. Water rises easily enough to the level once reached. How much force must be expended to carry it above this ! The treaty successfully imposed on the world by some great statesman, serves only to remind his school-fellows of his old time triumphs in the playing-field or the classroom. Many a brilliant general has been known to study his battles with the aid of tin soldiers. The future merely repeats the past, in new combination, and in relation to changed problems.

Thus we arrive at the fundamental laws of nation-birth. *Any country which is geographically distinct, has power to become the cradle of a nationality. National unity is dependent upon place. The rank of a nation in humanity is determined by the complexity and potentiality of its component parts. What anyone of its elements has achieved in the past, the nation may expect to attain, as a whole, in the future. Complexity of elements, when duly subordinated to the nationalizing influence of place, is a source of strength, and not weakness, to a nation.*

The truth is, if there is a real nation in the world, a nation with a unity so longstanding and

so deep (the growth of thousands of years) that it has become a part of the very intellectual and moral fibre of the people, an ingredient of their very life-blood, that nation is India. Compared with the unity of India, that of every American and European nation is superficial and ephemeral.

That India's unity is made up of variety, that many constituent elements enter into it, has been beautifully expressed by her eminent poet, Rabindranath Tagore in the following lines :

We are one all the more, because we are
many :

We have made room for a common love,
A common brotherhood, through all our
separateness.

Our unlikenesses reveal the beauty of a
common life deeper than all,
Even as mountain peaks in the morning
sun

Reveal the unity of the mountain range
from which they all lift up their
shining heads.

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